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Friday, 25 February 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Biaou	(Benin)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

Cross-border issues in West Africa

Progress report of the Secretary-General on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa (S/2005/86)

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05-24925 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cross-border issues in West Africa

Progress report of the Secretary-General on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa (S/2005/86)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Luxembourg, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Ould-Abdallah to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation to Mr. Ibrahima Diouf, Special Adviser on Child Protection to the Executive-Secretary of the Economic Community of States of West Africa (ECOWAS), under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Diouf to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2005/86, containing the progress report of the Secretary-General on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, at this meeting, and I invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: This open debate on cross-border issues in West Africa comes at a critical moment for peace and security in the subregion. We see some signs of hope and encouragement. Yet we also see very worrying developments.

As the current crisis in Togo reminds us, much remains to be done to establish peaceful, constitutional transfers of power as the region's norm. I urge all sides in Togo to exercise maximum restraint while efforts continue to find a peaceful solution to this crisis.

The progress report that you now have before you reflects my serious concern about the perpetuation and indeed proliferation of conflict situations in West Africa. It details the efforts of the international community, including the United Nations Office for West Africa, to adopt a regional approach to peace efforts in the region and to implement the recommendations made last year by this Council.

The region continues to face grave security challenges. Border areas are especially volatile, with populations at risk from illicit trafficking of drugs and weapons, recruitment of child soldiers, banditry, rape and environmental damage. The lack of funding for reform of the security sector, and in particular for the reintegration and rehabilitation phases of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR) programmes, is disturbing, given their central importance.

Youth unemployment levels are shockingly high, and the accompanying desperation carries a real risk of political and social unrest in countries emerging from crisis, and even in those that are currently stable. And there is very rapid population growth in the region's

urban areas, where job opportunities are limited and social services are far from adequate.

The report highlights areas that require immediate and longer-term action. Its recommendations are directed at a wide range of players, including the Security Council and other parts of the United Nations system, bilateral and multilateral development partners, the secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), individual Member States and civil society organizations. They place particular emphasis on good governance. And they call on all of us to practice prevention and to address root causes of conflict at an earlier stage.

I welcome the recent efforts of ECOWAS and its members to address the complex challenges facing the region. There is growing cooperation among security agencies to crack down on cross-border crime. Efforts are also under way to protect children, to stem small-arms flows and to involve civil society groups more regularly in peacebuilding and other initiatives.

I am also pleased at the constructive partnership that has emerged among ECOWAS, the United Nations system and other relevant actors. My Special Representative for West Africa, Mr. Ould-Abdallah — who is here with us today — and his team will continue to do their part. I assure the Council of my own strong commitment, and I look forward to working closely with it, on an urgent basis, to improve lives throughout this region where improvement is so badly needed.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa.

Mr. Ould-Abdallah: I am very pleased to be here today and to participate in these discussions on the progress report of the Secretary-General on ways to combat subregional and cross-border challenges to peace and security in West Africa. Together with my colleagues, I thank the Secretary-General for his strong support. We also wish Benin a productive presidency of the Security Council. We are grateful to Security Council members for their continuous attention and interest with regard to the challenges to durable peace in West Africa.

My Office remains focused on the fulfilment of its mandate. In that connection, we will continue to do the following. First, we will facilitate coherent and integrated approaches to peacebuilding among United Nations entities established in West Africa. Secondly, we will strengthen our partnership with West African States and subregional organizations, especially with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Thirdly, on behalf of the Secretary-General, we will continue to carry out preventive diplomacy and early warning missions. Fourthly, we will continue to go beyond the news headlines, report to Headquarters on significant developments in the subregion and devise policy recommendations that provide a basis for effective peaceful crisis management. Finally, we will initiate outreach activities, in partnership with West African Governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and other international actors, to address persistent and emerging challenges to peace and security.

Recommendations from the Security Council are the focus of our attention. The needs and requirements of West African States and people will continue to motivate and guide our work.

The mandate of my Office is carried out in a particularly complex environment with new and recurrent crises. That makes our commitment crucial. Working within such a complex environment also further complicates our task. We take small steps in emergency situations where giant leaps would be more appropriate. Hope and faith in a better future should, however, remain alive and vibrant.

To strengthen our action within the framework of our mandate, we focus on three broad challenges.

The first is an institutional challenge. We must further strengthen institutional collaboration among the United Nations entities in West Africa. Of particular relevance here are the meetings of the Heads of three United Nations peacekeeping missions — in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone — and the United Nations Office in Guinea Bissau, which I chair on a quarterly basis. Those meetings are aimed at broadening inter-mission cooperation, improving the exchange of information and experience, pooling assets and collaborating across State borders.

Stronger collaboration between the United Nations and other partners in the subregion — especially the Organization's partnership with ECOWAS, West African States and civil society — is also a priority. We will also continue to institutionalize our collaboration with development partners, including the World Bank and the European Union. In that connection, I should like to mention the ongoing trilateral partnership among the European Union, ECOWAS and my Office, the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA).

There is also a methodological challenge. Amid multiple challenges, we have to prioritize issues, areas and objectives. As suggested by a number of Council members during the retreat last June on Long Island, UNOWA has established a matrix for a more effective follow-up of Security Council recommendations contained in the presidential statement of 25 March 2004 (S/PRST/2004/7). Issues such as small arms, child soldiers, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, roadblocks and cross-border peacebuilding are among our key priorities.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, we are targeting the tracing and marking of small arms, the establishment of a regional register and the transformation of the ECOWAS Moratorium into a legally binding instrument.

In the area of security sector reform, combating non-military threats to the security sector is a main priority. Specific issues to address are health — especially the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in armed forces and security forces — the administration of justice and the strengthening of customs services.

With respect to integrated borders and cross-border peacebuilding, four clusters have been established: Guinea/ Côte d'Ivoire/Liberia/Sierra Leone, Mali/Burkina Faso/Côte d'Ivoire/Ghana, Mauritania/Mali/Niger and Senegal/Gambia/Guinea-Bissau. Specific security, humanitarian and social development priorities are being prioritized.

Finally, in connection with our efforts to contribute to the strengthening of ECOWAS's institutional capacity for peacebuilding, an objective defined in the June 2004 UNOWA-ECOWAS joint work programme was the elaboration of an ECOWAS peacekeeping curriculum. The curriculum, which is aimed at informing future regional peacekeeping operations, is currently being finalized.

There is, finally, a last challenge: the doctrinal challenge. Our efforts to build peace concentrate on countries at war. That is a logical course of action, given the burning political and humanitarian emergencies encountered in such States.

Countries not at war, however, deserve support. They remain fragile and could be weakened by violence in their neighbourhood. Stronger support from the international community is needed for countries with working democratic processes, such as Ghana or Niger, where free and fair elections have been organized most recently.

The challenges ahead remain daunting. Togo, where a clumsy transfer of power was followed by great confusion, is a clear illustration of the fragility of peace and stability in parts of West Africa. Togo should also remind us that unless we address small crises in a timely and coherent manner, they could easily be transformed into bigger and more complicated issues, as happened in Côte d'Ivoire. Another concern is about what will happen next October with the scheduled elections in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. What might the impact be on Sierra Leone?

However, we remain confident that ongoing collaboration between the international community and West African populations and States will help to overcome some of those challenges. For the last two years we have worked closely with the Ghanaian chairmanship of ECOWAS. Our collaboration with Niger, current chair of the West African organization, is equally strong. Naturally, the support of the Security Council remains a precious asset.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank Mr. Ould-Abdallah for his kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ibrahima Diouf, Special Adviser to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Mr. Diouf *(spoke in French)*: First of all, I should like once again to transmit to you, Mr. President, the warm wishes of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), who has been following our work very closely and is very pleased at the debate we had the

day before yesterday on child soldiers. The Executive Secretary also asked me to convey his congratulations to the Security Council and to say how pleased he is by the special importance that the members of the Council have given to questions of peace and security in Africa, particularly in West Africa.

With regard to today's debate, this is something that the Executive Secretary holds dear because, as the Council knows, at its beginning, ECOWAS did not include peace and security on its agenda. The main purpose of ECOWAS is to foster economic regional integration through policy harmonization by adopting a community-based approach to development and socio-economic problems. However, the emergence of crises in West Africa forced ECOWAS to review its agenda and revise its work in order to include questions of peace, security and stability. That means that when we looked through the interim report of the Secretary-General, we were particularly struck by his exhaustive coverage of those problems and the relevant solutions that he has proposed throughout the report, which we completely support.

As the Council knows, the cross-border problems that we face in West Africa — including human trafficking, small arms and light weapons exportation and proliferation, money-laundering and illicit drug trafficking — are all threats to peace, security and stability. Those threats stem from the fact that today there are organized gangs with networks in several countries of the subregion and even outside the region who control the entire process linked to those activities.

In recent years, the region has experienced a number of political, ethnic and religious crises, which have jeopardized the economic progress made in some of the Community's member States. Non-State armed gangs very often prolong armed conflicts, thus leading to massive destruction of infrastructure and to economic collapse. Most of those gangs survive by means of arms and drugs trafficking, money-laundering and human trafficking, and very often they control the richest areas of the countries in crisis.

Within the ECOWAS area, such armed gangs are often both numerous and complex. They have political roots and, depending on the situation, may mutate into criminal gangs. Their composition is diverse, even where, as in most cases, one ethnic group constitutes the group's core. And even if they have roots in a political party, they very often escape the control of the party, particularly when attempts are made to end a crisis. There are also foreign citizens in those gangs who have been recruited or who have freely joined the movement.

It is that modus operandi which encourages, inter alia, the participation of children in armed conflicts and their use as soldiers. The porousness of our borders, the spread of poverty, underemployment, the weakness of security forces and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons that I have mentioned are all factors that lead to the entrenchment and expansion of those armed gangs, who may be based in a country neighbouring their theatre of operations.

In West Africa, as we have noted, the modus operandi of those armed gangs is based on violence and terror directed against civilians. In light of the situation, ECOWAS, which is very concerned about the well-being of our population and the impossibility of development without peace and security, has established a number of instruments in order to prevent and combat those negative activities. Those instruments include, for example, the Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, the Convention on Extradition, the Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the Protocol to Combat Illicit Trafficking in Drugs, a protocol against money-laundering and the Intergovernmental Action Group Against Money Laundering, the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa and, finally, the Protocol for the Establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace and Security.

ECOWAS has identified three main strategic approaches to implement those instruments.

First, there is the political dimension, which is intended to restore dialogue among belligerents while insisting on the need to respect the basic laws of the country concerned. ECOWAS has continued to emphasize that political approach in order to avoid rewarding rebellion.

Second is the legal approach, which seeks to facilitate the deployment of a rather strong security force within the context of a comprehensive peace agreement. In this regard, cooperation with institutions having jurisdiction over war crimes has been helpful.

Thirdly, aspects related to development are taken into account through the process of building, rebuilding and restoring infrastructure with the participation of our development partners.

We would stress here that ECOWAS also attaches special importance to prevention as a major way to combat cross-border problems. This is why ECOWAS adopted the Additional Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the Protocol for the Establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace and Security, as well as a protocol relating to the free movement of goods and people.

Those protocols tackle the main causes of conflicts in the region and provide clear indications with regard to the process to be implemented and respected in establishing a favourable context for sustainable peace. We could also refer to the separation of powers, independence of the legislative branch, the right to free association, participation of women and young people in the development and reconstruction process and in the peace process, the role of the army in a democratic society and, finally, combating the proliferation of weapons.

Those are a set of guidelines that should be followed in order to bring about an environment conducive to good economic and social development in the subregion, and those are the points I wanted to share with you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Diouf for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): The report of the Secretary-General and his presence with us today are both exceedingly welcome, as is your presence, Sir, underlining the importance of this subject.

The report addresses key issues, many of which we discussed during the mission of the Security Council to West Africa last June. The discussions we had there in the field and with the special representatives demonstrated to us all the importance and the vitality of the work being carried out in West Africa and the job being done, day by day, making clear why the United Nations is crucial to the development and peaceful progress of West Africa.

I have to say that, as I am confronted by people in New York and elsewhere who complain about the inadequacies of the United Nations and why we are not doing this, that or the other, it is striking in West Africa that the message one gets consistently is appreciation for what day by day the United Nations does on the ground, and the plea is not so much "Could you get out of our hair?", but "Please, can we have more of the United Nations?".

We give particular thanks for the briefings we have juts heard from the Special Representative and from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose contribution is immeasurable and, of course, increasing.

I should like to associate myself with the statement to be made later by the presidency of the European Union, the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg.

Cross-border and regional cooperation in West Africa is becoming a model for other regions facing similar issues — a model showing the benefits that cooperation can bring. The need for us to support regional and subregional efforts in Africa seems to me obvious.

The efforts being made to further peace and security demand a response from the United Nations and from the Council in particular. The need for stronger institutional links between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) is obvious; we discussed that at our meeting in Nairobi. But the practical cooperation now between the AU and what it is doing in Darfur and what the United Nations wants to do as a whole in the Sudan just demonstrates the practical case for that cooperation.

Last year's mission was encouraging. It demonstrated that progress was being made to strengthen coordination on the ground between United Nations bodies as well as cooperation with ECOWAS, with national actors and with civil society organizations. That collaboration is particularly welcome, and it is essential if we are going to have a coordinated, effective effort.

Why do we need a regional approach? Why did the Secretary-General have the wisdom to appoint a Special Representative on a regional basis as well as the other special representatives? Well, partly it is because the problems of Africa and of individual

countries quite evidently transcend national boundaries. Indeed — and I think we heard this from an earlier contribution — the free movements in the unpleasant aspects of life are probably far more evident in West Africa than are the free movements in trade and in things that we should be encouraging on the economic and the political side.

As we solve, or get close to solving, a problem in one theatre, the risk is that one simply displaces the problem to the neighbour next door. There is a need for synergies of United Nations operations to actually be harnessed, especially in terms of peacekeeping — I apply that in terms of reserves, in terms of flexibility of deployment. There is a lot more that we should be looking at.

There is also a need for consistency — consistency between what is done in one country and what is done next door. We see the consequences and the distortions which happen in terms of payments for weapons handed in, in terms of handling disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), if there is not a coherence — hence the wisdom of the approach.

If I may, I should like to specifically address the subject of small arms and light weapons, to which the report rightly gives prominence. But in West Africa, as elsewhere, this scourge is both a feature of conflict and instability and the main source of that conflict. We should remember, as we address the grave problems that Africa confronts in terms of disease and other issues, this year of all years, that, actually, as many people die from small arms in Africa as from any other cause. That is the reality. The international community for too long has addressed this problem more in a rhetorical fashion than substantially; that has to change.

Let me suggest four priorities. First, United Nations missions need to be equipped, in terms of mandate and resources, better to monitor and implement arms embargoes, and, where we have imposed an embargo, we have to will the means as well as the end.

Secondly, we should agree and implement United Nations proposals for the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons used in peacekeeping, and then go beyond that to negotiate a binding international instrument to enable States to identify and trace all illicit small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly, we should agree international controls on the transfer of those weapons by the next United Nations review meeting in 2006 at the latest.

Fourthly and lastly, we should work towards the goal of an arms trade treaty to extend and entrench the international rule of law on conventional arms generally.

If I could now turn to DDR, a key issue. The report's findings on youth unemployment and the link to recruitment by armed groups are very striking. That aspect needs to be tackled if we are going to have any prospect of sustainable peace. Case by case, DDR is essential to actually develop sustainable peace and the rule of law.

So what do we need? We need efforts by the United Nations Office in West Africa (UNOWA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), ECOWAS and some others towards a more coherent approach to address this problem regionally. It is an area where donors can make a particularly important contribution, because, unless we fund the reintegration and rehabilitation in time of ex-combatants, what we face is a recurrence of conflict.

If I can think laterally and forward for a moment, one of the key proposals in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is to establish a peacebuilding commission. I should just like to invite us all to think how a peacebuilding commission could actually help West Africa. It seems to me that it is the best example of why we need such a commission, why we need to harness all the efforts of the international actors, the different constituents of the United Nations family, and say, this is what we are going to do to promote sustainable peace and development in post-conflict situations.

And I would go beyond that and say, as we look at countries in West Africa — again, as mentioned in earlier briefings — if I take Guinea-Bissau, where we were all struck by our experience there in June, and if one were to say to the Government of Guinea-Bissau today that "There is a peacebuilding commission in place, it addresses the problems that you confront, and, actually, if you like, although you are not in a classic post-conflict situation, would you like to be the subject of a concerted effort by the peacebuilding commission and the Bretton Woods institutions and everyone else to try to tackle your problems?" I have no doubt what the response of the Government would be.

One of the other reasons for this commission is, very simply, that, actually, those countries that lack an evident sponsor, that are, if you like, the orphans of the international community — they need somewhere to go, and the peacebuilding commission seems to be, to the British Government, one of the best ways that we can address these concerns.

In conclusion, can I say that out of this report, out of this discussion, out of the mission, there is encouragement, I think, to us all that cooperation and coordination is actually becoming the norm, but that we must do better and build upon that. In welcoming that, may I pay particular tribute to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and to the African Union, to commend them for what they do and for the singular leadership that they are showing.

I will end by referring to one situation, picking up on what the Secretary-General said earlier. ECOWAS and the African Union have had the courage to take a stance on Togo. The Secretary-General has done so on several occasions. Yet the Council has been silent. We have said nothing on Togo. The question the Council must ask itself — this year, of all years, as we approach a summit — is, when do the situation and the developments in a country actually justify the involvement of the Security Council? Is the failure of a Government to protect its citizens a grossly unconstitutional act? Whatever the circumstances, is such failure a basis for the Council to say, "We ought to stand up and be counted"? Or is the traditional view of national sovereignty and non-interference to be exercised without qualification, without regard to developments in the real world? Does that mean that the Council then must stand silent on these issues, or do we have an obligation in terms of international peace and security actually to stand up? I am quite clear for myself what the answer is.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, I would like to welcome you, Mr. Minister, and to thank you for coming to New York, despite a very busy schedule and the long distance, to preside personally over today's very important meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General for his presence and for his statement to the Council.

I listened attentively to the briefings by Mr. Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, and by Mr. Diouf, representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and I thank them for their presentations.

We are pleased to note that, since last year's open Security Council meeting (see S/PV.4933) and presidential statement (S/PRST/2004/7) on cross-border problems in West Africa, some very positive developments have taken place in that region. Cross-border problems have been the object of the full attention of the countries concerned. In addition, coordination and collaboration among entities of the United Nations system, subregional organizations such as ECOWAS, the countries in that region and donor countries have been strengthened. The reactivation of the Mano River Union gives cause for hope. ECOWAS has established its Small Arms Control Programme to combat the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. The peace processes in Sierra Leone and Liberia have also made headway. All those developments have created favourable conditions for resolution of cross-border problems.

China appreciates the positive efforts made by all parties and calls upon the international community to provide further assistance. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that, because of their complexity and their interconnected nature, cross-border problems in West Africa remain very serious and have taken a toll on the peace and stability of the area.

Some of the current issues are: the essentially uncurbed illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons; the use of child soldiers and mercenaries; lack of resources for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes; the recessive economic situation that has led to very high youth unemployment; and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in certain areas.

Some countries have been unable to break the impasse in their peace processes. The chaotic flows of refugees that have long been troubling the area have not eased. We believe that the solution of cross-border problems in West Africa ultimately depends on domestic stability in the countries concerned.

We support the West African countries in their efforts to adopt measures to promote the peace process

and to achieve substantive results. At the same time, in the light of their internal situations, genuinely effective measures must be adopted and the breeding grounds for cross-border problems must be eliminated. Here, we must proceed from the regional perspective and adopt integrated strategies.

We encourage subregional organizations such as ECOWAS and the Mano River Union to play their role, and we call upon the international community to provide financial support to aid them in capacity-building. The international community should also address and resolve the root causes of cross-border problems. The basic way to achieve lasting peace in West Africa is to promote comprehensive and sustainable social and economic development in order to solve the ever-worsening problem of high youth unemployment and to address and resolve the serious humanitarian problems in that area.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/86) and the outcome of the Security Council mission to West Africa have yielded many helpful recommendations for settlement of cross-border problems. They merit serious study by the parties involved with a view to their implementation.

In order to solve cross-border problems in West Africa, the help of the international community, especially that of the United Nations, is essential. We agree that the United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions in the area should strengthen their coordination. We hope that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa will play a coordinating role. We agree that the consolidated appeals process for West Africa should focus this year on alleviating the ever-worsening humanitarian and security situation in the subregion.

I reaffirm that China is ready to make joint efforts with the rest of the international community to promote a satisfactory solution of cross-border problems in West Africa at an early date.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to thank you, Mr. Minister, for having organized this very important public debate on the progress report of the Secretary-General on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa (S/2005/86).

It hardly needs to be said that those problems exacerbate the region's chronic instability. Their persistence threatens to undermine ongoing efforts to restore peace in countries in conflict situations and to build peace in countries that have recently emerged from conflict. Hence, we must attach great importance to these key issues for peace, stability and development in the subregion.

This annual gathering gives us the opportunity to take stock of the strategies agreed to and the means mobilized for their implementation. From that standpoint, the report of the Secretary-General is a valuable analytical tool which enables us to assess actions that have been undertaken so as to draw the necessary conclusions and make the needed adjustments.

It seems to us that significant progress has been achieved in the area of the diagnosis and understanding of cross-border problems which, as is well known, fuel, and are fuelled by, instability and conflict. Also, much progress has been made in preparing and refining strategies and programmes in response to those scourges.

As the Secretary-General's report indicates, however, there are shortfalls in the means available for action. Our future efforts therefore need to be directed towards strengthening the capacities of national and subregional organizations involved in the struggle and towards the mobilization of the significant necessary resources. In that regard, the report outlines a plan of action for achieving those objectives by promoting partnership.

It must be recognized that commendable efforts have been made by the United Nations system, among others, to build the capacities of subregional organizations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union, States and civil society, so as better to prepare them to play a lead role in action to address those problems. The launch of regional policies — in the context, inter alia, of ECOWAS, in coordination with and the with the support of United Nations agencies and institutions — in the areas of humanitarian affairs, conflict prevention, the free movement of goods and peoples, the phenomenon of roadblocks, child protection and support for civil society are bold projects deserving of the international community's support.

Institutional capacity-building and strengthening the means of subregional organizations must go hand

in hand with a similar effort on behalf of States that assume the responsibility of implementing policies of cooperation. One important aspect of such assistance is, quite clearly, reform of the security sector, which bears the difficult and delicate task of combating illicit trafficking in weapons, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, the monitoring of arms embargoes, and border control and security, among other things.

Support for local actors also involves the provision of technical assistance in the harmonization of the legislative framework at the subregional level, which is vital in order to address cross-border issues effectively and in a coordinated manner. It goes without saying that harmonization should also involve United Nations-sponsored missions and programmes. Significant efforts have already been made to improve cooperation and coordination among the United Nations peace missions in the subregion. Moreover, the strengthening of the United Nations Office for West Africa has allowed it to play its full role in designing policies and coordinating their implementation on the ground.

Much has been said of the importance of addressing the problems associated with disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement programmes in the context of a regional perspective. While the relevance of such an approach is self-evident, its practical implementation is no easy matter. We must therefore pursue and expand our thinking about the possibilities of designing and implementing regional plans of action.

Cross-border problems are complex in nature and must be tackled as part of an integrated and multidimensional approach. While the struggle against those evils is certainly the primary responsibility of the States of the region, it nonetheless presents a challenge to the international community as a whole. The countries of the region cannot win their battle against the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons or the use of mercenaries without the assistance of external partners. The problem of refugees, the reintegration of former combatants, the resettlement of displaced persons and youth unemployment all require significant resources, and their resolution is bound up with the establishment of conditions conducive to sustainable economic development.

The challenges facing West Africa are difficult, but they are not insurmountable provided the development partners demonstrate political will. The conditions are, in fact, in place to create partnership relations with the organizations and States of the subregion and the representatives of local communities. Such partnership can be established if we base our action on the priorities set by ECOWAS or within the context of the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Thank you very much, Sir, for convening this important meeting. The situation in West Africa commands the ever-greater attention of the Council, since not only are States in the region suffering from years of conflict, but some may even relapse, and new crises are not excluded.

In that regard, we echo the calls made by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, for all parties in Togo to exercise maximum restraint. We also commend the prompt reaction of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to preserve the democratic process in that country.

As we have stated time and again here in this Chamber, conflicts happen and recur for a reason; they are not self-generated explosions. They have immediate causes and they have root causes. One such cause, which should be placed at the top of the list, is poverty. The lack of means to lead a dignified life will leave people with nothing to lose. Violence has always been a last resort of the oppressed — oppressed by different ethnic or religious groups, by Governments and also by poverty, hunger and hopelessness.

The dire humanitarian situation still faced by the countries in conflict in West Africa must be addressed from an integrated and strategic long-term perspective that covers cross-border needs. The cross-border approach is of particular relevance in that context because problems and crime feed into each other from country to country across the porous borders of the region. Even when there is success in tackling them in one country, we cannot be effective if neighbouring countries are not being offered the same path. From international donors and humanitarian agents, we require not only the fulfilment of pledges under the consolidated appeals process, but also greater coordination so that efforts and resources are not wasted and valuable lives and human dignity are preserved.

We have been dealing with the particular situation of different countries in the region under four different items of the agenda of the Security Council. Since we are dealing specifically with cross-border issues in West Africa, I take this opportunity to centre my comments on two issues: small arms proliferation and reintegration.

There are still important loopholes in the international regime for the legal transfer of arms that allow for the diversion of arms to the illegal market, although we have been working over the years with like-minded delegations to minimize them. We are discussing the matter thoroughly in the Open-ended Working Group established by the General Assembly, and also took it up last week in the Council. In the regional context, we welcome recent initiatives taken by ECOWAS towards greater control of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We particularly welcome the establishment of its Small Arms Control Programme, aimed at converting the ECOWAS moratorium into a legally binding instrument. We urge international partners and donors to offer technical assistance and support to ECOWAS efforts to reach that highly anticipated objective. South-South cooperation ought not be excluded either; there is a wide array of possible ways in which it can prove useful to developing countries.

We may be reaching the point where criminal activities, such as trafficking in small arms, linked to numerous violations of human rights and to the criminal exploitation of natural resources, may be subject to the proceedings of the International Criminal Court. They place a heavy burden on the integrity of human life and affront our ideals of peace.

The dignity of human life leads me to the other point I want to raise: the importance of reintegration and development initiatives to avoid the recurrence of conflict. My delegation is truly heartened by the attention given in the report of the Secretary-General before us to the question of reintegration programmes and the absolute need to generate economic activity in order to ensure sustainable peace. We fully subscribe to the assessment made by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 27 to 30 of his report, on the importance of reintegration, with specific attention to child and female ex-combatants and to youth unemployment. We are particularly pleased by the ongoing collaboration between the United Nations Office for West Africa and the International Labour Organization — working with other United Nations entities and the Economic Community of West African States, civil society and the private sector — to devise a regional strategy to address youth unemployment. We note that fair trade for African commodities remains elusive; that issue will have to be urgently tackled in the appropriate forums.

We have to find durable solutions to the lack of economic development — and I mean not only by attracting foreign investment and generating jobs, but also by promoting sustainable income-generating activities and training for self-employment. The news that the United Nations Mission in Liberia is mapping women's organizations involved in small businesses is a very positive development. We expect that that exercise will bear fruit in terms of offering needed support and training.

The delegation of Brazil would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the recommendation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to establish a peacebuilding commission in the United Nations. The matter should rightly be discussed in the General Assembly, but the idea itself — that peacebuilding must command greater attention — is a very welcome one. Whatever decisions are taken in the General Assembly, it has already been demonstrated that we can benefit from greater cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council under Article 65 of the Charter. Even if one were to consider it from a strictly utilitarian perspective, it is not useful for the Organization to invest so much in peacekeeping and in disarming and demobilizing combatants if we do not do enough to remove the temptation of power and the stimulation conferred by the possession of weapons and to avert vicious behaviour towards other human beings. We need a more comprehensive approach to armed conflict. It is not a purely military matter, and it is certainly not confined within borders.

I would like to say one final word to commend the increasing efforts undertaken by United Nations missions in the region to work together and to build a constructive partnership, as referred to by the Special Representative. I thank him and his Office for their leadership in a very challenging environment. That is the right path to follow. On that path, we must increase our efforts to achieve an all-encompassing understanding of conflict and to take action.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania welcomes the progress report of the Secretary-General on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa (S/2005/86). That ongoing effort makes it clear that the challenges facing West Africa are not unique to that region. We must all therefore have a greater interest in finding practical and sustainable solutions to the perils that afflict the African continent.

The West African subregion is a geographical entity that has reached a significant high level of integration in Africa, with a common purpose and shared concerns. The subregion's community of nations offers a framework for subregional cooperation and a reference point for the African Union and the rest of the international community, including the United Nations, to work with. It is in that context that we have a platform to discuss a regional approach to cross-border issues and problems in West Africa, which should be encouraged and replicated in other parts of Africa.

The internal conflict in Liberia, which began in December 1989, triggered a chain of events in other parts of the subregion. For it is true that internal conflicts — whether involving various ethnic, religious or political groupings within one country or cross-border national clashes across borders — have contributed to a growing number of civilians being caught up in fighting and have pushed many internally displaced persons into unsafe areas or forced them to flee their own countries to neighbouring countries in search of safety. That movement away from conflict areas also risks inciting upheavals in other areas or exacerbating existing or simmering conflicts.

In the United Republic of Tanzania we know too well that exiles and refugees sometimes seek to become active in conflicts in the areas to which they have been displaced and to influence political events at home. Sometimes they turn the violence they have witnessed or perpetrated on the people and country that have provided them with succour and sanctuary. Those negative and destructive dynamics need to be contained and reversed. West Africa has experienced that cycle of violence and its attendant instability.

It is in that sense that the mixed picture of the situation in West Africa presented by the Secretary-General cannot be too comforting. Progress towards sustainable peace in the region remains critical. Achievements in Liberia, where it all started, as well as in Sierra Leone, offer us great hope. But the situation in the Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau and the recent events in Togo are a source of continuing concern. The efforts by the United Nations Office for West Africa, subregional organizations, United Nations entities and civil society organizations need to be commended and supported.

West Africa has demonstrated remarkable leadership in Africa in the areas of conflict resolution and the maintenance of regional peace and security. In recognition of that, it needs the support of the international community if it is to overcome the challenges it continues to face. The report highlights the pressing need to harmonize disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, with specific reference to programmes for women and children. In a region whose borders have historically been porous and are now becoming increasingly open as a result of the process of integration, no single country can overcome that challenge. The United Nations — and, indeed, the international community as a whole — must facilitate and support that process.

In a zone where combatants continuously circulate across borders and where there is a constant flux of refugees and returnees, it is only through an effective regional approach to DDR that we can we hope to contain the negative region-wide effects that are likely to result from the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. At the same time, in countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, where refugees are ready to return, they should be helped to integrate and to participate in post-conflict peacebuilding.

Tanzania notes the encouraging steps that the members of the Mano River Union have taken to set up effective mechanisms for consultation and control, notably on ways to deal with mercenaries. We welcome further efforts to determine practical ways to promote the building of confidence, peace and stability in the subregion in line with the Security Council's call on the Mano River States to resume dialogue. In that regard, we commend the role of the United Nations Office for West Africa and call for more sustained efforts, including continued contributions, to improve the capacity of the Economic Community of West

African States in the area of crisis management and to address the problem of youth unemployment as a factor of instability in the subregion, in collaboration with civil society organizations.

In many respects, many of the cross-border problems facing West Africa — and, indeed, Africa as a whole — are also related to issues pertaining to approaches to development. There are practical contributions that a focus on development can offer in addressing those phenomena. Development policies must seek to shape conditions in the region that foster growth in terms of constitutional structures, functioning State institutions and the emergence of the rule of law. The advanced regional institutions which ECOWAS has evolved so far offer a convenient policy framework and programmes for development partners to contribute to national development and regional integration.

The Millennium Development Goals stress that good governance is one of the critical factors in promoting stability and thus in fighting poverty and insecurity. Conflicts are unlikely to occur when people are satisfied with their governance structures. We note with great interest the measures which are being taken at the national and regional levels in West Africa to institutionalize democracy, the rule of law and good governance at all levels.

The aspirations of the people of West Africa to live in peace, security and prosperity deserve our full support. The Security Council must leave no doubt that they have its support. Tanzania fully subscribes to the draft presidential statement presented to the Council by Benin.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): We are again honoured by your presence, Mr. Minister. We congratulate you, and we thank you and your delegation for convening this important meeting to discuss ways and means to address cross-border issues in West Africa.

We also welcome the comprehensive briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and by the representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

We share the Secretary-General's assessment that the situation in West Africa is a mixed picture of positive developments and continuing challenges. One of the significant developments is the increased collaboration among the United Nations presences in West Africa: UNOWA, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Mission in Liberia, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. This includes regular meetings among the heads of the five peacekeeping and political missions to promote joint planning and strengthen opportunities for regional cooperation. At the operational level, we note the meetings of the force commanders of the three peacekeeping operations. Inter-mission cooperation at that level maximizes the operational capability of the United Nations on the ground and creates synergies, which gets the job done more efficiently and saves on costs. We welcome the establishment of an inter-mission secretariat to coordinate the meetings, and we look forward to the forthcoming report on inter-mission cooperation, which will provide details on information sharing, joint use of mission assets and logistics. We also commend UNOWA for the specific work it has done to raise public awareness about subregional and cross-border problems by undertaking field missions to sensitive areas not covered by the mandates of peacekeeping operations and by developing mechanisms and enhancing linkages with ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and other international partners. We reiterate our support for UNOWA and for the recommendations that have been made to strengthen it.

The contributions of ECOWAS and the newly reactivated Mano River Union also deserve attention and recognition. We have been informed that ECOWAS and UNOWA have developed a detailed work programme of cooperation which includes priority projects on security sector reform and electoral assistance and a regional strategy for addressing youth unemployment. We hope that this institutionalized cooperation will yield great benefits in the field. The next summit meeting of the Mano River Union countries, to be held later this year, will continue the momentum that has already been generated.

My delegation also recognizes the important role played by civil society in addressing subregional and cross-border issues. Aside from disseminating information and raising awareness, they play an

integral part in post-conflict peacebuilding with their established networks for the actual implementation of programmes in the field. UNOWA has been actively engaging members of civil society in its work by inviting them to meetings with United Nations partners, as well as by informing and consulting them when going on field missions. We support that type of collaboration and hope that it can be expanded in the future.

Three specific issues and challenges should be highlighted: the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; harmonization of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes; and focusing on post-conflict peacebuilding. My delegation welcomes ECOWAS efforts in implementing its moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms, through the establishment of a small arms unit and the adoption of its Small Arms Control Programme. We hope that ECOWAS will further strengthen the intent of the moratorium by transforming it into a legally binding instrument.

The need to harmonize DDR programmes was addressed by the Security Council mission to West Africa in June 2004 when its members held intensive discussions with their interlocutors on the ground. We note that the resulting workshops came up with a set of policy recommendations and practical guidelines on a regional DDR programme in West Africa and that the participating national commissions on DDR established a network for regular exchange of experiences. My delegation hopes that the Secretariat can brief us regularly on developments on this issue.

Emphasis should be placed also on post-conflict peacebuilding. Addressing the root causes of conflict as a preventive strategy and properly addressing post-conflict challenges deserve equal, if not greater, attention. Jobs and economic opportunities are essential elements for lasting peace as they address related problems such as refugee crises, high youth unemployment and other social and economic ills.

Like Brazil and the United Kingdom, we consider that the suggestion by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change relating to the establishment of a peacebuilding commission to address precisely those issues deserves support.

In conclusion, my delegation underscores the need for subregional and cross-border issues to be addressed in a comprehensive manner and stresses the great importance of that approach. Best practices a lessons learned from ECOWAS countries could w serve as examples and could migrate to other regi and subregions.

We commend your delegation, Mr. President, drafting a presidential statement on this subject, wh we support and which we hope will be adopted at end of this meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank representative of the Philippines for the kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke Russian*): We are happy, Mr. Minister, to see y presiding over the work of the Security Council tod and we welcome your delegation's contribution to consideration of this item.

Consideration of the subject under discussion the Security Council today clearly shows that in W Africa there is great potential for subregional a cross-border problems that pose a threat to the pea and security of the continent, to the integrity of States and to the prosperity and lives of its people. T ongoing conflicts in the region, the activities of illeg armed groups, the proliferation of small arms and lig weapons, attempts to seize power by unconstitutio means, trans-border crime, the use of mercenaries a child soldiers, the issue of refugees and internal displaced persons: those are all negative factors wi an extremely tragic impact on the situation both West Africa and in the continent as a whole.

Our delegation has repeatedly stressed that long-term solution to the complex African crisis can found only through a comprehensive, holistic approa combining coordinated action by Member State organizations of the United Nations syste subregional organizations, the international don community and bilateral and multilateral developme partners.

We have carefully studied the report of t Secretary-General before us today (S/2005/86). recommendations are comprehensive and, on t whole, consistent with the goal of neutralizing the ma cross-border problems of West Africa throug comprehensive strategies to resolve problems in bord areas, security sector reform, programmes disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR the conversion of the Economic Community of We

African States (ECOWAS) moratorium on small arms and light weapons into a legally binding convention, the creation a subregional register of small arms and light weapons and the reintegration of former combatants and child soldiers.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the primary responsibility for carrying out these programmes should lie with the African States themselves. However, we cannot fail to recognize the insufficient logistic and financial assistance that countries of West Africa are receiving for that purpose from the international donor community and from financial institutions.

We are pleased to note the beginning of the implementation of recommendations of the Secretary-General which reflect ideas that the Russian delegation put forward during Council missions to West Africa and during the relevant thematic debates. The idea of creating national commissions to resolve the problem of child soldiers is gaining ground and national legislation to combat impunity is beginning to be modernized. It is important that this work be focused and that it yield tangible practical results.

We agree with the Secretary-General regarding the need to strengthen the borders of African States and to create joint security mechanisms in border areas. It is important — without prejudice to inter-State relations to trade and economic cooperation, to integration processes or to border contacts between people — that specific steps be taken along the borders to stop dangerous occurrences, such as the movement of illegal armed groups, the spillover of conflicts and the illegal export of natural resources.

We are pleased at the further development of close interaction among United Nations missions in neighbouring States of the subregion and at the coordinating role played here by the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA). A clear example of that cooperation was the meeting that took place in December 2004 in Monrovia and the meeting, organized by UNOWA, of the heads of the five peacekeeping and political missions in West Africa, which considered practical issues and assessed subregional threats to the stability of the region. However, we would like to emphasize once again that coordinated action by United Nations forces in the subregion should not violate either the sovereignty of individual States or the mandates of individual peacekeeping operations.

One of the major components of the peace process in West Africa, without doubt, is the goal of improving political relations and pursuing confidence-building measures among the States of the Mano River Union. The summit meeting held on 20 May 2004 in Conakry among the leaders of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, with the participation of the President of Côte d'Ivoire, charted a course for creating effective mechanisms for consultation and for monitoring the resolution of trans-border problems, including in the area of combating mercenaries. We hope that those efforts will continue.

Russia views enhancing stability in Africa as an intrinsic part of the endeavour to establish, under United Nations auspices, a global system for countering new threats and challenges. Time does not stand still. Plans we outlined before to stabilize the West African region and to resolve cross-border problems are being implemented, although not at the pace we would like to see.

Much remains to be done. Child soldiers are resuming normal lives, but those who lured them into fighting have not been punished. The victims of gender-based violence are receiving assistance, but the rapists have not been prosecuted. Gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are continuing. The flow of illegal weapons that fuels African conflicts has not been halted. Imperfect legislation and poorly developed democratic institutions make unconstitutional regime changes possible. We need to give more thought to new ideas about how the Security Council can help West African States to strengthen their peace processes. We believe that work on such innovative ideas could take place in the Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Let me express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. It is most appropriate that it is Benin that is guiding us through the challenges pertaining to cross-border issues in West Africa. I also thank the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the Representative of the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS) for sharing their thoughts with us on this important matter.

I would like to associate myself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The violence, conflict and instability that haunt much of West Africa have taken a terrible toll in terms of lives and the welfare and development of the peoples of the subregion. It is therefore only appropriate that the Council, on a regular basis, should take stock of the problems of West Africa. In that regard, we thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2005/86).

We are pleased to note that some progress has been made towards peace, stability and democracy since the Council's last debate. Elections are scheduled for this year in three of the countries on the Council's agenda — events that could finally prove the power of the ballot over the bullet as a means of legitimate transfer of authority in that part of the world.

There are, however, numerous grounds for continued concern, not least the deteriorating situation in Côte d'Ivoire, which has strong repercussions in the whole region, such as stalling economic activity, reversing migrant flows and fuelling flows of refugees, increasing the use of mercenaries and the acceptance of impunity.

It is evident that the root causes of the conflicts have yet to be tackled, and equally evident that addressing the situation in individual countries in isolation will not bring lasting peace to West Africa. Together with other actors in the security, humanitarian and development fields, the Council must design its response to the conflicts within an overall subregional framework for joint and integrated action. Only in that way can we ensure that all the actors involved in conflict prevention in West Africa pull in the same direction and guarantee viable exit strategies. The forthcoming action plan by the United Nations Office in West Africa (UNOWA), ECOWAS and the EU will hopefully contribute to that end.

Against that background, let me briefly offer some thoughts on areas of action that we deem particularly important.

First, the strengthened African involvement in conflict prevention and management is to be welcomed and encouraged. The prompt and firm response of ECOWAS to the recent developments in Togo is a clear case in point and deserves our full support. Denmark firmly believes that African ownership and participation in conflict management should be further strengthened and encouraged. The Council should explore how to best support the ongoing efforts to build an African security architecture and should closely work with ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) to advance ways and means of cooperation. When we say this, it should not be misinterpreted as a way of extricating ourselves from the problems of the continent, but rather as evidence of our firm conviction that Africa needs home-grown solutions to its problems. The goal should be to establish efficient partnerships and an equitable division of labour between the United Nations and African organizations in accordance with their comparative advantages. To that end, ECOWAS and the AU should aim at further harmonizing their policies, institutions and activities, and should clearly indicate their focus areas.

Let me note that Denmark contributes actively to enhancing the capacity of African regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention not only through the European Union but also through substantial bilateral assistance. Thus, Denmark, through its Africa Programme for Peace, allocates €33 million to such activities.

Secondly, I would like to stress the continued role of United Nations missions in the region and the need to make the most of them. Many initiatives have been launched to increase the liaison across missions. We look forward to the specific report on inter-mission cooperation.

We strongly believe that more can still be done to join forces and pool assets across the United Nations missions in West Africa to better tackle cross-border issues. The effort to stop sanctions-busters, soldiers of fortune and mercenaries from operating across borders and taking their deadly business from one country to the next could be enhanced by, inter alia, mandating peace operations to engage in the monitoring and enforcement of sanctions, including joint cross-border controls. Further sharing of resources would free up capacity for other pressing tasks. With approximately 25,000 United Nations peacekeepers in the region, there should be room for economies of scale. We recognize the practical problems involved, but, instead

of being paralysed by such problems, we should stimulate new and constructive thinking.

Thirdly, with regard to specific areas of action, I would like to reiterate the calls for the development and dissemination of best practices for security sector reform, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. Experience in West Africa suggests that the choices made by security and armed actors in times of heightened political conflicts are crucial in determining whether or not States descend into chaos. Depoliticizing the role of security forces and subjecting them to democratic oversight are prerequisites for preventing new conflict and building peace.

The approach to security sector reform must go beyond regular military and police forces; it must also include Government-supported militias, irregular combatants and civil defence groups, and it must be tackled within the wider context of the judiciary and the legislature. The DDR processes in the region must be further harmonized. In that regard, we are pleased to note the plans of the Secretary-General. As we mentioned last week during the debate on small arms (see S/PV.5127), the possibility of funding a larger share of DDR-related activities in peace operations through assessed contributions should be approached with an open mind.

The DDR process should be tailored to specifically take into account the problem of children and discontented, disillusioned West African youth. Denmark strongly believes that that challenge must be addressed within the security-development nexus. There is a need to deal with both youngsters directly involved in fighting and minors who have been kept as sex objects and forced labourers by armed groups and who, in many instances, have ended up as victims of HIV/AIDS and illegal drugs. To counteract the ease with which youngsters are drawn directly or indirectly into the abyss of violence, looting and killing, national and external actors must carefully assist the young generation in building a civilian life where their potential can be released and their aspirations fulfilled. The young generation should be acknowledged as capable citizens and drawn into mainstream politics.

In conclusion, the clear interrelationship among the three themes that the Council has debated within the past six working days — small arms and light weapons, children and armed conflict and cross-border problems in West Africa — is worth noting. Each of the debates has made clear how security and development are closely interrelated. They have also made clear that the demand on national, subregional, regional and international actors to tackle the root causes of conflict in Africa in general and in West Africa in particular is mounting, not waning. An adequate response can be achieved only if all of us join forces in a common strategic approach. Denmark stands ready to do its share.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Denmark for the kind words she addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Oshima (Japan) (*spoke in French*): Permit me at the outset to thank you, Mr. Minister, for having taken the initiative of organizing this debate on subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa. I am pleased to note the important role being played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in an effort to help countries emerge from conflict, to consolidate the peace achieved and to promote security and development in West Africa. In that context, my delegation assures you of our full support.

I also thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Ould-Abdallah, for the important report (S/2005/86) on this subject. We particularly appreciate the integrated approach, mentioned in the report, to the issues of humanitarian assistance zones, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, security sector reform and border control. The report addresses a variety of issues, but I would like to refer specifically to three points that we consider to be of particular concern: security issues, especially small arms and DDR; cooperation and coordination among United Nations missions; and governance.

First, I would like to discuss the issues of small arms and DDR. The Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons will be held this year, and the first review conference on that subject is scheduled for next year. It is our hope that the countries members of ECOWAS will make further progress towards implementing the Programme of Action prior to those meetings. As recommended in the Secretary-General's report, transforming the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms and light weapons into a

legally binding instrument could be an example of that kind of success, together with the establishment of the Small Arms Unit already created within the ECOWAS secretariat and further cooperation among the countries in the region to control the illicit flow of small arms in border areas. We hope that the moratorium will be further strengthened so that it can serve as a model for other regions on this issue. My Government has been playing a leading role here, and Japan's specific contributions in this area were outlined in our statement at last week's open debate on small arms. As indicated in our statement, my Government is determined to continue its contribution to the development of international frameworks on this issue and to the promotion of projects on the ground, such as the collection and destruction of illicit small arms.

Concerning the DDR process, it is particularly important to tackle the issue of reintegration, particularly the problem of youth unemployment, in order to avoid the recurrence of conflict. We welcome the conclusion of the disarmament and demobilization processes in Sierra Leone and Liberia. We look forward to further progress in collecting the small arms remaining in communities and to new progress in the reintegration phase in those countries. Japan has extended assistance of nearly $10 million for reintegration programmes in both countries, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and will continue to provide such assistance in future. Furthermore, the disarmament process in Côte d'Ivoire is facing difficulties. Since DDR is an important aspect of the peace process, we wish to ask all parties to the conflict to tackle that issue in good faith.

Secondly, I would like to touch on the question of coordination and cooperation among the United Nations missions. Since the United Nations missions in the region are playing a role more far-reaching than ever before, we must consider how best we can mobilize the limited resources available to the Organization. It is a positive development that the chiefs and force commanders of the five United Nations missions in the region are maintaining close communication and coordination with each other. We very much hope that this mutually cooperative relationship will be further promoted and at many levels. We believe that cooperation among the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in the area of border control is of special importance.

UNAMSIL will be withdrawn at the end of this year, and we need to keep that in mind when considering what form future cooperation could take among United Nations missions in West Africa. Controlling Sierra Leone's borders with its neighbours, particularly Liberia, will be a special challenge, and we hope that the Government of Sierra Leone will continue to play an important role through its cooperation with the relevant United Nations missions such as UNMIL.

With regard to humanitarian assistance, it is encouraging that this year's consolidated appeals process for West Africa is focusing on preventing any deterioration in the human security situation in the region and that close cooperation is occurring among the various actors in the field, such as coordinated group meetings organized by the Secretariat's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Japan is contributing actively in the area of refugees and food assistance, amounting to $120 million since 2000.

Thirdly, I wish to speak of governance. Recently we witnessed an unconstitutional transfer of power in Togo. That runs counter to the efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa and ECOWAS to prevent the seizure of power by such methods, as described in the report of the Secretary-General. We pay tribute to the ECOWAS efforts to find a solution to this issue, and we very much hope they will lead to an early and peaceful settlement in accordance with the will of the Togolese people.

We fully share the view of the Secretary-General that "the primary responsibility for promoting peace in the region rests with West African leaders and communities themselves". One of the important pillars of Japan's policy towards Africa is the consolidation of peace through ownership by the African countries themselves. My Government highly appreciates the fact that in that spirit African nations and organizations have been increasingly exercising their ownership in resolving conflicts in the region in recent years. It is also encouraging that through public information activities and education, civil society, United Nations missions and the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) are implementing their programmes at the grass-roots level in order to promote peace and security.

We are expecting important elections this year in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau. We hope they will be conducted successfully through the exercise of ownership by those three countries, with the necessary assistance provided by the international community. My Government is prepared to continue providing assistance in a positive spirit to the efforts to consolidate peace and development in West African countries.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Holliday (United States of America): I wish to thank Benin for putting this important subject on the agenda. The United States appreciates the thorough work done in the report of the Secretary-General. We recognize that this is a complicated issue, and we commend the efforts under way to address these difficult problems.

We welcome the increasing cooperation on cross-border issues among the United Nations missions in the region, particularly among the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and the other missions, as well as the enhanced level of coordination in patrolling in the vulnerable border areas. That approach makes sense and is the best possible and most efficient use of material and resources.

Similarly, we welcome the emphasis on developing cooperation between civil society groups across borders, as well as United Nations coordination with regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union. We encourage private sector collaborations in order to continue to build peace and stability in West Africa. Reactivation of the Mano River Union may also provide opportunities to develop practical ways to promote greater peace and stability in the region.

Many good points have been made this morning, so I will just touch on a few specific aspects of the report.

As noted in our recent statement on children affected by armed conflict, the United States understands the tragic consequences suffered by children affected by those conflicts and welcomes the development of effective and harmonized disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategies in West Africa, particularly where children are involved. However, we note that funding for such programmes remains a challenge. The United States, like many other nations, is studying the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and believes that each recommendation, including those regarding funding, needs to be weighed carefully with the goal of achieving broad consensus on measures that will produce increased efficiency while addressing the central problem at hand.

We endorse the need for greater security sector reform and underline the need for the creation of democratic, professional security forces, drawn from all groups in various societies. We also support the Secretary-General's commitment to stop continuing violations against children, including recruitment or use of child soldiers in violation of applicable law, unwarranted attacks on schools and hospitals and the maiming and killing of children. That includes rape and sexual violence and unwarranted denial of humanitarian access to children.

As last week's Council meeting on small arms and light weapons demonstrated, there is a need to address the fact that destabilizing, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has proven a major obstacle to peace, to economic development and to efforts to rebuild war-torn societies. We commend the work of ECOWAS in that field, and we support efforts to strengthen the Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa.

The United States also believes in accountability and holding accountable those individuals who commit crimes, and we note the report's mention of the occurrence of trafficking in arms, natural resources and human beings. We continue to have a different view, perhaps, with regard to the most appropriate forums in which to hear those particular cases.

Finally, I wish to say that we salute the efforts of all the peacekeepers and United Nations personnel involved in West Africa, and we also note the tragic reports coming in today of the loss of life among peacekeepers in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our hearts go out to them.

Once again we thank you, Mr. President, for bringing this subject to our attention.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to you personally, Mr. President, and to the Government of Benin for giving the item on cross-border issues in West Africa high priority on the agenda, thus underscoring the serious concern about the threat to regional peace and stability posed by cross-border problems and trans-national illegal activities.

Greece welcomes the report of the Secretary-General and wishes to express its appreciation for the analysis of the main challenges and the relevant recommendations contained therein.

I would also like to commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his effective efforts in addressing the issue, and the representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for his insightful comments.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statement to be made at a later stage by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

Civil conflicts and their severe humanitarian impact, the subsequent flow of refugees, the increasing use of mercenaries and child soldiers, the proliferation of small arms, the mismanagement of natural resources, failed economies and endemic corruption are prominent among the factors contributing to instability and requiring a wider and multifaceted approach covering the entire region. The development of a comprehensive regional approach to deal with those issues is a priority goal of increasing importance and could also contribute to treating the interlinked root causes of the region's complex problems.

The victims of today's conflicts in West Africa have been predominantly civilians, regardless of their nationality. Improving regional integration and cooperation in all areas of conflict management, conflict prevention and peacebuilding will therefore be of significant benefit to the well-being of the people of the whole region.

West Africa should be a high priority for all. As the Secretary-General points out in his report, while several States in the region have already embarked on a serious effort towards economic and democratic reform, there are still others where conflict persists, threatening the stability and security of all. Addressing, in an effective manner, the longstanding structural macro-economic, human rights and governance failure has therefore taken on new and more urgent meaning.

African ownership of the whole endeavour is a basic element of our approach. West African States should be helped to enhance their capacity to pursue policies aimed at social and economic development in order to eliminate the possibility of future conflicts.

Turning to specific cross-border issues, it is development which provides a guarantee for the successful reintegration of ex-combatants into society and for finding lasting solutions to youth unemployment, thus eliminating the risk of ex-soldiers' being recruited once again by parties to a conflict.

Greece welcomes the call for a regional disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) plan of action, made at Dakar in August 2004 by United Nations peace missions, United Nations agencies and other development partners.

We also acknowledge that the illegal trafficking of arms poses a serious threat to peace and stability in the region, and we affirm our support for the strict implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We also welcome the extension for three more years of the ECOWAS moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons and encourage the efforts being made to transform it into a legally binding instrument.

We believe that, by publicly naming those who violate the arms embargo and the ECOWAS moratorium in order to bring them to justice, we would not only demonstrate our determination to reinforce the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council, but also create a factor of deterrence for those who might wish to violate them in the future.

The Secretary-General's report therefore rightly points out that the subregion continues to be confronted by the phenomenon of violent military adventurism aimed at seizing power, which constitutes a threat to stability and hinders the process of peacebuilding in individual West African countries.

Greece therefore strongly supports the initiatives taken by ECOWAS and United Nations agencies in West Africa in introducing integrated policies to

reform the security sector, thus enhancing stability and democratic governance in the region.

My Government, recognizing the efforts made by ECOWAS, has recently made a substantial offer in order to promote ECOWAS activities. We will continue to do so to the extent of our ability. Moreover, as a member of the European Union, Greece has been actively contributing to overall efforts for peace, stability and development in the region.

In concluding, I would like to reiterate our strong conviction that only through a close and coordinated partnership of all those involved, including civil society, will it be possible for the international community to reconcile immediate requirements with long-term goals.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Greece for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the fact that the Benin presidency decided to convene this open debate today on the problems of West Africa, and we thank you for this, Mr. Minister. We would like also to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and for his presence, which attests to the importance of the issue. We welcome also the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ould-Abdallah, and of the representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We thank them for their contributions to our debate, and I will come back to some of the points they made.

Last year the Council met at a time when hope was emerging in West Africa. Now, unfortunately, we must acknowledge that the situation is still very fragile and that there are potential crises undermining its stability and development. The Secretary-General earlier painted a gloomy picture of the situation, and I certainly support what he said in that regard.

I wish to address two situations that are of great concern to us.

First, the situation in Côte d'Ivoire is very disquieting, as the electoral deadline is approaching. France, like the Security Council, unreservedly supports President Mbeki's mediation efforts through the African Union. Côte d'Ivoire is a great country in the heart of West Africa. It must absolutely return to the path of peace and reconciliation. It is in its interest and in the interest of the whole region, and hence of all Africa.

I am thinking also of the situation in Togo. There the assistance and efforts of ECOWAS and of the African Union will be decisive in bringing about — as my country has consistently strongly emphasized — the restoration of constitutional order and the holding of free and transparent elections.

It is clear that the courageous determination of the African organizations is the main factor in ensuring stability in the subregion and in the continent as a whole. We must continue to support the activities of African countries themselves as they work for peace, development and prosperity on their continent.

The African Union's Peace and Security Council is now a full partner of the Security Council, which itself devotes a great part of its work to Africa, and in particular West Africa. Each, of course, has its own role and functions, but our activities must be complementary.

Nor can I overlook the fact that, in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the African States have chosen further to develop their collective action in favour of peace and security and, towards that end, to enhance their institutional and operational capacities.

All these initiatives attest to the fact that the African countries have taken stock of the challenges facing their continent and that they are resolved to tackle those challenges themselves. It is, of course, incumbent on the international community to support those efforts and France, for its part, will continue to lend them its full support.

In order to be fully effective, the mobilization of the international community must not be confined to sporadic assistance to individual countries facing crisis. In the long term, it must benefit the entire subregion. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/86) is a useful contribution in terms of that approach. Here, the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mr. Ould-Abdallah should also be commended.

The report contains a large number of specific recommendations. Without going into detail I would like to highlight a few points. First, we see a pressing need to end the trafficking in small arms and light weapons and the recruitment of mercenaries and child

soldiers, which destabilize entire countries and destroy the futures of many individuals. It is incumbent upon all States of the region to tackle those issues. Responsibility lies also with all other States concerned with the export, brokering or financing of such trafficking.

The resolve of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to replace the 1998 moratorium on small arms and light weapons with a truly binding instrument is, we believe, a promising step. ECOWAS knows it may rely on the support of the European Union in achieving that objective, as the representative of Luxembourg will state on behalf of the European Union presidency.

France also supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations be given the means to guarantee respect for arms embargoes. We are convinced that that would be a useful investment. Ensuring respect for arms embargoes today means avoiding the outbreak of hostilities tomorrow.

Security sector reform, also addressed in the Secretary-General's recommendations, will be a key element for the stability of the countries of the region. It will ensure that the rule of law prevails, prevent the recruitment of child soldiers and promote respect for human rights.

With the assistance of the international community, the countries of the region should pool their efforts in order to better control their borders, dismantle illegal roadblocks which hinder the free movement of people and goods, combat the illegal exploitation of natural resources, ensure security in refugee camps and combat trafficking in narcotics.

We believe that there are a number of other points which could be used to support the recommendations of the Secretary-General, and we propose two. Why not consider a regional embargo on arms intended for the use of non-State actors? In addition, could we not assist the countries of the region to strengthen their control over their national resources, with support from United Nations peace operations or other specific mechanisms?

My country attaches particular importance to settlement of the crises in West Africa. But, as the report of the Secretary-General makes clear, the future of the subregion lies in the hands of African leaders themselves. We can only encourage the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, ECOWAS and the African Union to continue their remarkable efforts to work together with the region's stakeholders to combat the scourges that have, for so long, been besetting West Africa.

Before I conclude, I would like to note that my delegation has just learned of the death of nine Blue Helmets in Ituri. We are shocked by their deaths and by the fate of the injured — I think that some 11 people were injured in the attack. This reminds us of the danger faced by peacekeepers as they carry out their mission. We pay tribute to them and await a report from the Secretariat on the circumstances of this tragedy.

I would like to convey our condolences to the authorities and the people of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been making a very significant contribution to the Organization's peacekeeping forces, and my delegation is particularly affected by this tradgedy.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his solid progress report on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa (S/2005/86). We appreciate the presence and the valuable contributions of the Special Adviser to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa.

Romania associates itself with the statement to be delivered by Ambassador Hoscheit of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

As the Secretary-General points out in his report, West Africa still presents a mixed picture. Encouraging news of progress and prospects for peace and development are counterbalanced by chronic and pervasive socio-economic problems and worrisome political developments. We are all alarmed by the recent developments in Togo, and we are fully behind the actions taken by ECOWAS and the African Union.

Lingering crises such as the one in Côte d'Ivoire also offer reasons for deep concern, as negative

developments in any West African country may easily have a broader impact. West Africa is probably one of the best examples of the need for a comprehensive and harmonized approach to conflict situations. The important investment the international community has made in individual countries could be wasted if the many cross-border problems calling for durable solutions in the larger regional framework are ignored. We need a long-term process, as the level of commitment should measure up to the profile of the region which is emerging from decades of war and instability.

The report of the Secretary-General offers a pragmatic view on steps already taken or still required to tackle the cross-border problems affecting West Africa.

Against that backdrop, we would like to make three general points. First, we note with appreciation the trend towards greater coordination within the United Nations system. In that regard, we look forward to the report of the Secretary-General on inter-mission cooperation in West Africa.

Secondly, as Romania resolutely advocates closer cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, we appreciate, in particular, the spearheading role that ECOWAS is playing in West Africa as a relevant and successful partner of the United Nations. ECOWAS is actively involved in the implementation of many of the Security Council's recommendations. We hail in particular the increased cooperation among the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), ECOWAS and the European Union, with the goal of developing a regional conflict prevention policy. We trust that the United Nations Office will continue to work towards ensuring the necessary regional coherence in the wide-ranging activities in West Africa.

International and regional efforts must certainly be backed by fundamental political changes at the national level in areas such as participatory decision-making, transparent and accountable governance and administration, and fighting impunity and corruption. Solutions to West African cross-border issues are ultimately a function of the efforts of the regional countries themselves — their leaders and civil societies alike. Efforts aimed at reactivating the Mano River Union could be worthwhile in countering cross-border threats. The Union could also offer new possibilities to tackle the issue of sensitive border areas.

Thirdly, cross-border problems, such as illicit trafficking in arms, the illicit exploitation of natural resources, and the phenomena of child soldiers and mercenaries cannot be truly dealt with in the absence of viable prerequisites for development. The United Nations achievements are more than a function of security gains. The importance of a successful reintegration phase in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, as well as the creation of adequate job opportunities for young people, including ex-combatants, cannot be overstated as critical steps towards stable and peaceful societies. We still need to figure out better ways to articulate a meaningful cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council with respect to post-conflict situations. The donor community and such international institutions as the World Bank should also step up their efforts to help national authorities and regional actors in that direction.

Finally, I would like to make four brief comments building upon the specific recommendations that the Secretary-General made.

First, the reform of the security sector in West African countries, as well as improved relations between civil and military structures, are vital conditions in order to achieve stability in the subregion. There will be no lasting peace so long as State policies can be dictated at gunpoint.

Secondly, we welcome the decision of the ECOWAS member States to convert the moratorium on small arms and lights weapons into a legally binding instrument, and we encourage them also to consider the setting up of a regional register of small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly, the implementation of sanctions regimes should be conceived in the same regional logic. A "naming and shaming" list could also be a powerful tool in achieving compliance with arms embargoes and the ECOWAS moratorium.

Fourthly, in many areas of West Africa the humanitarian situation remains a great concern, with considerable potential to affect the stability of the entire subregion. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's appeal to fund a regional humanitarian response, with special emphasis on sensitive border

areas affected by conflict and on their major problems: the recruitment of child soldiers, widespread instances of rape, illicit trafficking in drugs and weapons, and banditry.

With general elections planned in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, and presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau, 2005 is an electoral year for West Africa. These are opportunities for the whole region to set a steady course towards political stability, national reconciliation and economic growth.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Romania for his kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish first to thank the presidency of Benin and you, Sir, for convening this important meeting. Argentina welcomes and is gratified by your presence at this meeting of the Security Council. We also welcome the presence of the Secretary-General and extend our thanks to his Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, Mr. Ould-Abdallah, for his introduction of the report. We also thank the Special Adviser on Child Protection to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mr. Ibrahima Diouf.

Argentina welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations formulated for the West African subregion in the prior report of the Secretary-General and the 25 March statement by the President of the Security Council, and by the Security Council mission to West Africa of June 2004.

In that regard, we wish to highlight the regular contacts maintained between the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and other United Nations entities, as well as the regular meetings held by the heads of the five political and peacekeeping missions in the subregion, with a view to developing integrated strategies in vulnerable border areas.

Cooperation among United Nations entities in West Africa, designed to harmonize subregional disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, will help to consolidate peace processes throughout the region. In that respect, we find interesting the recommendation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change that a standing fund for peacebuilding be established that could be used to fund rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, for example in West Africa.

However, cooperation should not be confined to military or political issues, but should be extended to relieving the precarious humanitarian situation of refugees and displaced persons in the subregion. The initiative taken by ECOWAS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with a view to carrying out joint activities on such issues as security in refugee camps or harmonizing refugee policies in West Africa should be seen as a step forward.

Argentina feels that the joint cooperation initiative of ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations Office for West Africa, designed to promote the effective implementation of the 1979 ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of people and goods and also to address the problems of roadblocks and the extortion associated with them, is a vital element in promoting the economic development of the region and generating employment allowing former combatants to be reintegrated.

As we all know, if there is to be trade and the free movement of people, there must first be peace and political stability in the region. In that regard, my country welcomes the new Small Arms Control Programme adopted by ECOWAS with a view to converting its moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons into a legally binding instrument. The establishment by ECOWAS of the Small Arms Unit, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the moratorium and its ultimate conversion into a convention, should be supported by contributions that will allow it to operate efficiently. Security sector reform, with the support of the international community, ECOWAS and the future regionally integrated programme of the United Nations Office for West Africa, is another essential instrument for preventing future conflicts.

Although international assistance is vital to promote peace in the region, it should be underscored that, as the Secretary-General notes in his report, the primary responsibility rests with the leaders and communities of West Africa. The Governments of the region should therefore not allow individuals who violate human rights or take part in such unlawful

activities as weapons and natural resources smuggling or money-laundering to enjoy impunity.

I would like to conclude by urging greater cooperation among civil society, ECOWAS and international organizations in order to prepare and implement plans of action on the cross-border issues we have discussed. The establishment in the ECOWAS secretariat of the post of coordinator for civil society issues to strengthen Africa's regional capacity in the area of peacebuilding points to the road ahead.

Finally, I would like to say that my delegation supports the draft presidential statement that may be adopted at the end of this meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Benin's Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration.

The delegation of Benin welcomes the holding of this meeting. I congratulate those who have made statements for their contributions to our collective deliberation on subregional cross-border issues posing a threat to peace and security in West Africa. I would like in particular to thank the Secretary-General, who honours me with his presence. I would also like to thank Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, for his introduction of the Secretary-General's progress report on ways to combat subregional and cross-border issues in West Africa (S/2005/86).

The report has the great virtue of highlighting a series of problems that have, or could have, a decisive impact on efforts to stabilize the West African subregion. Some of the problems it addresses have already been discussed in depth in the Security Council this month. I would recall the presidential statements adopted after the debates on small arms and children and armed conflict (S/PRST/2005/7 and S/PRST/2005/8). The views of the Government of Benin on those issues were amply covered on those occasions.

The seriousness of the consequences of these problems poses a real danger to the future of the States of the West African subregion. No one questions the need for effective action to combat them. In countries emerging from crisis or armed conflict and in neighbouring countries, those problems are made worse by deficiencies in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, which face very serious funding problems in the critical reintegration phase.

To that is added the humanitarian problems experienced by displaced persons and refugees and those associated with massive youth unemployment. West Africa has arrived at a dangerous point due to the risks that such problems pose to the stabilization efforts of countries emerging from armed conflict as well as to the institutions of countries that are now stable. In that connection, it is absolutely necessary to harmonize DDR programmes while taking into account the needs of women and children affected by armed conflict. We commend the various United Nations entities involved in that process. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has demonstrated great energy in addressing these problems. It deserves the full support of the international community in order that it may continue its work.

In that connection, I would like to reiterate the determination of the Government of Benin to actively contribute to the implementation of effective strategies to resolve those problems. Benin also agrees with the Secretary-General's analysis and with his recommendations to the Council, particularly with regard to the need to develop integrated strategies in sensitive border areas. In that connection, I am pleased to mention in particular the concept of local integration among bordering countries that was adopted by the ECOWAS Foreign Ministers meeting held in Accra on 18 January 2005. That concept, which promotes local communities' management of border areas, has led to the development of a programme with very specific goals: the cross-border initiative. Those goals include, first, the development of a convention on trans-border cooperation in the ECOWAS area to enable local border communities to conclude cooperation agreements among themselves; secondly, the spread of trans-border initiatives among all ECOWAS member countries; thirdly, the formulation and implementation of pilot cross-border projects; and, lastly, the exchange of experiences with other regions, in particular with regard to cross-border movements in Europe.

By adopting the concept, the ECOWAS Foreign Ministers meeting decided to take appropriate steps to

ensure its implementation on the basis of a participatory process that involves all ECOWAS member States. Among other things, there is a plan to establish an association of West African border regions and towns. The United Nations Office for West Africa should take those initiatives into account and give them its full support in the context of its own work. Those initiatives reflect true awareness of the need to manage border areas and make them an instrument for the promotion of peace and the well-being of the people living there. They are part of the efforts being made to improve basic conditions through the development and implementation of an integrated and coordinated approach to the prevention of conflicts in West Africa that involve all potential stakeholders, as the Secretary-General has advocated.

In that connection, there is real awareness in the West African subregion of the role of such decisive factors as good governance, the establishment and strengthening of democratic institutions and the need for security-sector reform. In that regard, West Africa fully supports the approach outlined in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We encourage the concerted efforts being developed or already begun to improve basic conditions in order to promote stability in West Africa. That strengthens the positive elements that make it possible — notwithstanding the shocks that have considerably weakened the area in recent years — to look forward with some optimism to the future of the West African subregion.

In that connection, the recent decisions taken by the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) should be highlighted, as they set an example for all ECOWAS member States. UEMOA includes eight ECOWAS member States. It has just decided to eliminate the roadblocks set up as checkpoints on the main roads linking the countries of the monetary area. They will be replaced by joint patrols, which will make it possible to reconcile the need for free movement of persons and goods between countries with the requirements of national security.

Those positive changes will enhance the growing confidence that development partners have constantly shown towards the West African subregion. Support of these measures could be a real expression of commitment by the growing partnership between the United Nations agencies and the countries of West Africa. The effectiveness of the work done by the international community for the West African subregion requires massive mobilization, which should extend over several years. The channels of cooperation between the countries of the region, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and development partners, multilateral and bilateral, should be supported through innovative initiatives that are coordinated and tailored to the needs of the countries and the local realities.

In conclusion, I too would like to express condolences to Bangladesh, which has just lost some members of its peacekeeping team in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that very soon those who have been injured will recover. This difficult ordeal should not discourage us from continuing with peacekeeping operations in countries that are in situations of armed conflict.

I now resume my functions of President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, allow me to begin by welcoming you in our midst and congratulating you on the skilful way in which you are discharging your responsibilities as the head of this Council. It is a source of pride for us to see Benin presiding over the Security Council, a pride which is entirely understandable when one realizes that, in addition to being a neighbour, a brother and a friend of Burkina Faso, holding the same values and united in a common destiny within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Benin does us credit by its ardent and committed championing of the cause of peace.

Thus we fully understand that in your term in the presidency of the Council, you should wish to present for our consideration the thorny topic of cross-border issues in West Africa. You, Mr. President, are convinced, as we are, that the proper understanding and mastery of these phenomena will to a large extent determine whether stability and peace prevail in our subregion, thus enabling it to embark on genuine development.

We recognize, as the report of the Secretary-General does, that the last decade was particularly trying for West Africa in terms of conflict, political crises and insecurity in all its forms. Nonetheless, there

has been no lack of resolve and determination on the part of States or political leaders. Many of them have contributed with initiatives that have helped to rein in some forms of violence and banditry. Those initiatives include, among other factors, police cooperation and exchange of information among States and regular consultations among the authorities responsible for security issues. Even the bilateral commissions have offered opportunities to rethink the measures and actions undertaken to combat insecurity and instability in West Africa.

But it is plain that much more needs to be done to promote and render safe the free movement of people and goods among member countries within the meaning of the ECOWAS Protocol to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, trafficking in children and the recruitment and use of child soldiers and other mercenaries. Manifestly, there is a need for more resolve and more means to put a stop to monetary extortion and brutal acts committed at the roadblocks and to end the activities of traffickers and thieves of all descriptions. We must acknowledge that the magnitude of the actions required and the tasks to be fulfilled places a considerable constraint on the preventive and development policies of States and obliges them to rely on international assistance, first and foremost that of the United Nations.

The political and social consequences of the security situation and conflicts in West Africa have been thoroughly noted and studied in the successive reports of the Secretary-General. The Security Council itself became involved, including by dispatching a mission to the subregion in June 2004, a mission that reported exhaustively on the real situation prevailing in West Africa. Thus cooperation with the United Nations is encouraging and should be further strengthened with the admission of ECOWAS as an observer to the United Nations.

Above and beyond the specific assistance given in the context of peacekeeping operations, I believe that I can state that in Liberia and Sierra Leone and now in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations has, more than any other organization, made a decisive contribution in the struggle against two major scourges in West Africa: first, against the circulation of small arms and light weapons, in the framework of the Bamako Moratorium — to which much reference has been made this morning; and secondly, against the use of child soldiers, whose plight has been vividly depicted for us by Mr. Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

Still, in the area of cooperation, I must not forget the increasingly visible partnership with the European Union, particularly in the area of training, logistical support, assistance to post-conflict reconstruction and assistance in the humanitarian area.

In February 2004 there was a consultation between the European Union and ECOWAS at Abuja, which led to the establishment of a common work programme with clearly defined objectives. We take this opportunity — even if voices of greater authority have already done so — to commend and thank all those of good will who thus helped our subregion find a better balance for tackling the only worthwhile objective: the battle for development.

Above and beyond all those actions, it must be clearly understood that the maintenance of peace and security in West Africa is first and foremost the responsibility of the States and all the political actors there.

In conclusion, I wish to commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, whose important statement will undoubtedly help deepen our understanding of the issue, and especially to better define the vital elements of any resolution of cross-border issues in West Africa.

To you personally, Mr. President, we repeat how gratified we are with the exemplary way in which you represent us in the Security Council. Your colleague and friend, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, who would very much have wished to participate in this important debate but who was unable to travel at the last minute, has instructed me to convey this brotherly sentiment to you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Burkina Faso for the kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

I give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential

candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union thanks you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate. We thank the Secretary-General for his progress report on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa (S/2005/86), and we commend Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his efforts in that context. The report describes the steps taken or envisaged to develop an integrated regional approach to conflict prevention in West Africa — the only viable approach, in our view.

The European Union, which attaches great importance to its partnership with Africa and its people, is resolved to continuously strengthen our ties with the African Union and with subregional organizations. We believe that the promotion of lasting peace — without which there can be no sustainable socio-economic development — is one of the major challenges facing the international community.

The European Union deplores the fact that West Africa is still racked by armed conflict, which jeopardizes the long-term development of the whole region, not to speak of the unspeakable suffering that afflicts the population.

The European Union is following with great concern the recent developments in the political situation in Togo. We call for full respect for civil liberties and demand an immediate return to constitutional and legal order to open the way for free and transparent presidential elections. In that context, we fully support the actions by the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with a view to re-establishing constitutional order and the democratic process.

The prospects for the future in Côte d'Ivoire are also a source of concern for the European Union. Once again, we call on the parties to make progress towards the full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis and Acra III agreements.

I should like to stress three aspects that are particularly important to us in the context of developing an integrated and coordinated approach to conflict prevention in West Africa.

First, we need to unite our efforts to address post-conflict situations. The report states clearly that the various United Nations missions need to collaborate and that a constructive partnership must be established among the United Nations system, development partners and ECOWAS. In that connection, the European Union welcomes the fact that the representatives of the five United Nations peacekeeping and political missions in West Africa are meeting periodically.

Together with ECOWAS and the African Union, the United Nations and the European Union have essential roles to play in West Africa in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and they must establish a more effective partnership. The European Union notes with satisfaction that the establishment of truly collaborative mechanisms to address cross-border problems has begun, with respect for the principle of African ownership. We look forward with interest to the plan of action to be submitted in June 2005 by the joint working group of the European Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA). Another positive example is the collective effort to be undertaken this year to facilitate the cross-border movement of persons and goods. Our common goal should now be to enhance the functioning of our dialogue and to unite the various initiatives, including through the efforts of the special representative of the European Union presidency to the Mano River Union countries.

Secondly, we need to strengthen regional capacity-building. In November 2004, the European Union adopted an action plan on supporting peace and security in Africa, which deals primarily with capacity-building. The action plan identifies practical ways in which to meaningfully assist African organizations in building autonomous conflict prevention and management capacities, supplementing the initiatives undertaken in the context of the Cotonou Agreement and the Africa Peace Facility. The European Union invites those organizations to put forth proposals for long-term capacity-building. A comprehensive €10-million programme to enhance conflict prevention and management capacities is now being developed by ECOWAS, with the participation of the United Nations.

ECOWAS, which has already proved itself in the area of conflict prevention and management, has become a stabilizing force in the region. The challenge for ECOWAS remains to integrate short-term crisis management activities into a longer-term prevention strategy. The European Union will intensify its political dialogue with ECOWAS and its member States, particularly with regard to policies designed to address the structural root causes of conflict with a view to a lasting solution and the role of regional economic integration in promoting peace and security.

Thirdly, we need to urgently address a number of specific cross-border issues. In his report, the Secretary-General assesses efforts to deal with a number of major cross-border problems. Although some progress has been made, much remains to be done, and more collaboration and better-targeted efforts are needed in many areas.

Two days ago, the Council considered, under your presidency, Sir, the extremely important issue of children affected by armed conflict (see S/PV.5129).

The proliferation of small arms remains a significant factor of instability and conflict in the region. Resolute and coordinated action is needed. During the open debate on small arms that was held last week (see S/PV.5127), the European Union had the opportunity to express its willingness to help put an end to the scourge of the uncontrolled accumulation of small arms. While the European Union welcomes the recent three-year renewal of the moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms in West Africa, we also encourage efforts in the framework of the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme to transform the moratorium into a legally binding instrument.

In addition, the European Union supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Security Council consider giving peacekeeping missions the authority and the resources needed to monitor and enforce arms embargoes, as well as the idea of marking and tracing small arms used in peacekeeping missions. We should consider publishing a "naming and shaming" list of individuals and entities violating arms embargoes and the ECOWAS moratorium, and bringing before the International Criminal Court those responsible for criminal activities related to the trafficking of persons and of natural resources.

With regard to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), we welcome the ongoing efforts of the various United Nations presences in West Africa to find ways in which to harmonize programmes and to eliminate inconsistencies with a view to reducing the cross-border movement of combatants and weapons. The European Union also believes that the reintegration phase is of key importance for the success of DDR programmes. We call for increased international assistance — including financial assistance — for such activities in countries emerging from conflict, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. Moreover, particular attention should be devoted to programmes for child soldiers and women combatants and to job creation.

The importance of security sector reform as a means to improve national governance and enhance security through institutional change is clear at both the national and regional levels. ECOWAS projects in the area of security sector reform can be financed through the Africa Peace Facility created by the European Union, and we encourage the West African region to undertake initiatives in that area. Accordingly, the European Union welcomes UNOWA's intention to establish regionally integrated programmes by the end of 2005.

The European Union's support for peace and security in West Africa is part of a coherent European Union policy towards Africa. The European Union has earmarked €235 million for West Africa under the current regional indicative programme, mainly in the sectors of regional economic integration and transport. The European Union's integrated long-term strategy for West Africa seeks to establish lasting peace and sustainable development, particularly through economic integration, and to create a customs union among ECOWAS countries. It includes constant attention to the vulnerable position of women and children and the increased risk of HIV/AIDS in armed conflict.

While the primary responsibility for progress in West Africa rests with its leaders and communities, let me conclude by reaffirming again that the work of the European Union will be based on the principle of unreserved cooperation and coordination with all actors in the field, including civil society organizations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Luxembourg for the kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time under your presidency that my delegation has the honour of taking the floor, Mr. President, I wish, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you and to thank you for organizing today's debate on a topic dear to Africa: ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa. We wish also to assure you of the great satisfaction that my delegation feels at seeing you, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at this meeting. That attests to the importance that the sister Republic of Benin attaches to subregional and cross-border problems, faithfully echoing the ongoing concerns of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the United Nations regarding West Africa.

To guide this debate, the Secretary-General has issued a report on the topic under consideration, which is very instructive and which he introduced himself. His briefing was supported by Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, and also by the Special Adviser to the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, Mr. Diouf. I wish to pay tribute to both of them for their briefings.

Since independence many subregional and cross-border problems have affected international peace and security in West Africa, and they undermine all the development efforts of our States. Those problems are the increased use and unlawful proliferation of mercenaries, child soldiers, small arms and light weapons and their accessories, ammunition and explosive devices; a culture of impunity; the spread of HIV/AIDS; the continued weakening of the security sector; youth unemployment; environmental degradation; social exclusion; wars; mass movements of refugees; unfair and unlawful exploitation of natural resources; weak national institutions and civil society structures; violation of human rights, particularly those of women and children; and poor public management. Sadly, this list is far from exhaustive, as the Secretary-General himself recognized in his report S/2004/200.

The frenzy with which many producers, brokers and traffickers in small arms and their accessories illegally prey on Africa generally and on West Africa in particular is not mentioned. Similarly, there is no reference to the most perverse manifestations of liberalization and globalization in poor countries, for example.

If cross-border and subregional problems, whose links and cumulative mutual effects have been clearly highlighted by the Secretary-General, are not thoroughly listed, described and universally recognized, we will not find a realistic and achievable solution any time soon. By periodically adding to his analyses of the real political environment prevailing in the poor countries of West Africa, the Secretary-General will help to enhance a realistic understanding of subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa on the part of the Security Council and will thus help the Council to arrive at cohesive and rapidly evolving solutions to those problems. That will also contribute to the implementation by all actors, subregional and international, in the political life in West Africa of concerted actions that the Council will have assigned to them, both to entities of the United Nations and to their various partners.

My delegation commends the Secretary-General for his efforts to develop an integrated and coordinated approach to conflict prevention in West Africa, and we welcome the progress achieved in settling specific cross-border problems, to which he refers in the progress report before us for this debate. We encourage him to pursue and step up those efforts because we firmly believe — along with ECOWAS, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union and the Non-Aligned Movement — that Africa as a whole and West Africa, with which we are concerned today, will find salvation only through the effective and good-faith implementation of the integrated and coordinated approach to conflict prevention that is being developed.

My delegation can only welcome the fact that finally, as the Secretary-General had already pledged in his report S/2001/574, the United Nations has undertaken, in an irreversible manner, the healthy transition from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. By striving to achieve and tirelessly implement this culture of prevention, the progress, however modest, that has already been achieved in settling specific cross-border problems will ultimately pave the way to a progressive strengthening of international peace and security in West Africa. Such

progress will create and strengthen the optimal conditions for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and will reduce, and indeed eliminate, the need for United Nations peace missions in West Africa. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations is well aware of the growing burden that they represent for the United Nations, since such peace missions tend to become interminable. Everyone will be relieved by the possibility of ending them.

Let us hope for an effective transformation of the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms into a legally binding convention, which will complement the existing legal instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, their accessories, components and ammunition, as well as explosives.

It is essential to sensitize decision makers and populations so that they understand that, thanks to resolute action by States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), States will be able to control the transfer, stockpiling and use of weapons, which especially in Africa means strengthening democratic institutions and the capacity to provide public security. NGOs will have a role of monitoring, and of providing information and education to the population so as to support the democratic functioning of public institutions.

We ardently wish to see harmonization and concerted action, in West Africa as well as in the whole of Africa, to implement national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes that receive, in a timely manner and at the necessary level, essential external technical, material and financial support. It would be desirable for integrated strategies to be implemented for sensitive border areas in West Africa, indeed in Africa generally, along the lines of those promoted by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Let us look forward to such effective and concrete measures. Only then will the interminable cycle of violence and instability become a distant memory in the history of the independent States of Africa. Armed conflicts, the recruitment and proliferation of mercenaries and child soldiers, illicit trafficking in small arms, violations of human rights, impunity, corruption, unemployment, excessive population growth, most infectious diseases, and all cross-border and subregional problems will be resolved in a lasting fashion. Thus peace will finally be established and consolidated in West Africa, and our peoples, our States and our nations will embark on the path towards the genuine realization of the Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of NEPAD, for the benefit of West Africa, Africa, the United Nations and the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Côte d'Ivoire for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like to take this opportunity, Sir, to warmly welcome the holding of this open debate and to say how much we appreciate the outstanding manner in which you have been presiding over the Council. This meeting is another opportunity for us to consider ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa in order to restore long-term security and stability to the region.

The partnership for the maintenance of peace and security has yielded some results, particularly in Sierra Leone and in Liberia. Nevertheless, there are still major challenges to be met in order to consolidate peace in Guinea-Bissau; restore unity and peace in Côte d'Ivoire; and preserve the rule of law so as to be able to thwart attempted coups d'état, such as the dastardly attack perpetrated in my country against President Lansana Conté on 19 January last.

In that context — in which national, regional and international action is more important than ever in order to prevent the gains made from being undermined and to give impetus to the major economic and democratic reforms that are under way — in-depth consideration of the complex issue that is on the agenda of this meeting is very timely.

My delegation has already stated the views of my Government on the most effective ways to combat the use of child soldiers and to promote disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants. Now we would like to touch on ways and means to adopt a clear and coordinated approach aimed at finding lasting solutions to the problems of the proliferation of light weapons and of mercenaries, and to develop integrated strategies for the development of West Africa.

The seriousness and scope of the thorny question of light weapons is made clear in reports stating that about 500 million light weapons are circulating freely

in the world, of which 30 million are in Africa and 8 million in West Africa. The reports state that 60 per cent of those weapons are in the possession of civilians, and, unfortunately, that they kill some 500,000 people annually, of which 80 per cent are women and children.

That very grim picture is a confirmation of the fact that in Africa light weapons are not only the weapons of choice, but weapons of mass destruction as well. They are affordable, easy to handle and easy to obtain, and this explains in part why everyone has them. In addition, my delegation believes that it is the failure to harmonize national policies in keeping with the spirit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium and the absence of a legally binding instrument that have led to the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms.

We hope that the replacement of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development by the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme will contribute effectively to strengthening the capacities of national commissions. The Small Arms Unit established by ECOWAS, as the lead organization, should be given special attention by the donor community.

My country is convinced that the adoption by the West African States of a standardized end-user certificate and the establishment of an information-exchange mechanism, as recommended by resolution 1467 (2003) of 18 March 2003, adopted under the Guinean presidency of the Security Council, would help to trace small arms and to identify those responsible for their illicit trafficking.

Guinea fully supports the idea of a legal instrument for the marking and tracing of light weapons, as put forward by the Open-ended Working Group on marking and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, and we hope that it will be adopted at the group's third session in June 2005.

As stated in the report, the heads of State of the Mano River Union, drawing on their common experience, have called for the creation of effective mechanisms for consultation and control, notably on ways to deal with mercenaries. My delegation would stress that differences of view on this subject should not divert our attention away from the need to resolutely combat the problem and to eradicate it. The situation that has prevailed in West Africa for several years now is a challenge to us all.

Need I recall also that the high unemployment rate among young people and the failure to reintegrate former combatants in the long term pose an additional threat and exacerbate the problem of mercenaries in our region. That is why we suggest the inclusion, in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and in the mandates of peacekeeping missions in West Africa, of the principle of full respect for the relevant decisions taken by the African Union in combating the problem of mercenaries.

The steps taken at various levels in response to the appeals made by the Security Council to strengthen cooperation among United Nations bodies and their various partners and to promote a consistent approach to conflict prevention and to the consolidation of peace in West Africa do not yet fully meet the expectations of the Member States. This approach can be successful only if it is action-oriented and based on results in the field, with full cooperation on the part of the beneficiaries.

In that respect, the Government of Guinea deems totally inappropriate and has already rejected the decision taken by the International Contact Group for Liberia at its seventh working session, held on 17 September 2004, to expand its mandate and scope to include the other countries in the Mano River Union, as well as Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire.

We wish to reiterate once again the position of principle of the Government of Guinea, which was conveyed to the Security Council in 2003 during private consultations and which was also conveyed to the September 2004 ECOWAS ministerial meeting. That position has also been confirmed in writing to the parties concerned. That position states that, on the one hand, Guinea, unlike Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire, is not a country in conflict or emerging from conflict; and that our domestic situation in no way constitutes a threat to peace and security in the subregion and, accordingly, is not described as such on the agenda of the Security Council.

In other words, extending the mandate of the Contact Group for Liberia to Guinea, which was not possible in 2003, cannot be justified in 2005.

However, my delegation would like to say that the Republic of Guinea will continue to work tirelessly

to restore peace in the West African subregion. That is a consistent element of our foreign policy.

That is why Guinea is striving with resolve to reactivate the Mano River Union. That was made clear on 20 May 2004 following the Conakry summit of the heads of State of the Union, which included the presidents of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and of the Republic of Mali. Guinea has also made that clear by adopting an instrument on 2 September 2004 during the bilateral meeting between Guinea and Sierra Leone, held at the highest level, that enabled Guinea peacefully to resolve, in a fraternal context, the border dispute between Guinea and Sierra Leone, relating to the village of Yanga. Guinea has thus set an example of promoting trust, peace and stability with our neighbours.

Moreover, paragraph 39 of the report notes the launching in October 2004 of a new initiative, known as "Integrated strategies for sensitive border areas in West Africa", in order to address problems in those areas. It also notes that the initiative focuses on four clusters of countries, including Guinea, and that the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) is planning a follow-up meeting this year.

My country welcomes that good news and would appreciate it if the strategy or plan for the revival of our Forestière area could be communicated to us so that we could play an active part, which is essential for the success of the endeavour. We hope that the meeting set for this year on sensitive border areas, with our various partners, will be successful.

Turning to the issue of security, Guinea encourages the partners to continue their efforts to increase the capacities of the West African subregion in assessing and addressing the threats it faces. We urge the United Nations to strengthen cooperation among its political, humanitarian and economic missions in the subregion, stressing, in particular, the joint use of logistics and resources, including border patrols. We strongly support the report's recommendation on harmonizing appeals for necessary humanitarian assistance to countries in crisis and to neighbouring States affected by those crises.

In conclusion, allow me to welcome the fact that the United Nations is making a greater contribution to the restoration of peace and security in West Africa. Allow me also to reaffirm the unswerving commitment of the Government and the people of Guinea to work together with all our partners to promote the emergence of a new Africa, freer than ever before from the stigma of war, poverty and destitution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Guinea for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

The next speaker is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): Sir, my delegation too shares the view expressed by others that your presence here underscores the significance that Benin attaches to the role that the Security Council can play in the maintenance of peace and security in our West African subregion.

The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/86) — and we thank him for introducing it personally today — once again covers the entire spectrum of the steps now under way or being proposed to help combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa. My delegation would like to offer some brief comments on the observations and conclusions contained in that latest report.

The Secretary-General states in the report that many of the border problems require joint efforts by the countries and peoples concerned, including civil society and its organizations and local communities. In that connection, the Security Council will be interested to know that earlier this week, parliamentarians, chiefs and elders from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, all ethnic Kissi people, met at Koindu, a border town in the Kailahun district of Sierra Leone, in a historic step towards the consolidation of subregional peace and stability. Until the rebel war and other armed incursions into the area, Koindu was a thriving international market serving the three countries of the Mano River Union.

In the presence of their heads of State or Government, the Kissi parliamentarians, chiefs and elders resolved, among other things, that there is an urgent need to support their respective Governments to implement the regional and subregional protocols relating to peace, security and the free movement of people, goods and services in the subregion. Perhaps the most significant part of their communiqué was a request for the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, to facilitate the establishment of

international markets at Koindu, Gueckedou and Foya, and to improve the road network to facilitate easy access to those markets.

The Security Council may recall the serious humanitarian and refugee situation that arose in the areas of Gueckedou and Parrot's Beak almost four years ago, following a series of cross-border armed attacks. This week's meeting in Koindu should be seen as an important contribution to the integrated strategies, described by the Secretary-General in his report, for stabilizing border areas.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to mention another recent development in addressing what may be perceived as a potential cross-border problem. My colleague the representative of Guinea briefly referred to it earlier. This is the so-called Yenga problem between Sierra Leone and Guinea — something which, unfortunately, has been grossly exaggerated. The Security Council should take note of the Sierra Leonean proposal for an independent group of consultants, preferably under the aegis of the United Nations and working with experts from both countries, to replace the beacons that are missing along the border that had already been demarcated.

In his latest report, the Secretary-General has listed some of the areas where, in his view, much more remains to be done for a more effective contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in West Africa. He mentions, for example, the need to convert the ECOWAS moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa into a legally binding instrument. Sierra Leone shares the view of the Secretary-General that such conversion of the moratorium would send a strong signal to development partners and the wider international community that West African Governments are themselves prepared to address decisively the devastating effects of the proliferation of small arms — a major contributing factor to political, economic and social instability in the region. We acknowledge, in that connection, the support of the European Union and others for upgrading the moratorium.

Now that efforts are under way to convert the moratorium into a legally binding instrument, we believe that the Security Council should also send the same signal to the wider international community concerning the devastating effects of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It can do so by pronouncing itself unequivocally on the need for an international legally binding instrument on the tracing and marking of illicit small arms and light weapons. In our view, that would constitute a significant contribution to our efforts to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa. A non-binding instrument or political declaration is not enough. As the representative of the United Kingdom eloquently noted this morning, we must move from the mode of rhetoric to the mode of substance, in the form of a legally binding commitment to deal with that scourge.

One cannot speak about subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa without referring to the situation of youth, or what the Secretary-General rightly describes in his report as the shocking levels of youth unemployment in West Africa. That is the heart of the matter, and therein lies perhaps the most viable, effective and long-lasting means of dealing with conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development in the subregion. The state of youth unemployment manifests itself in such regional and cross-border problems as mercenarism, rebel recruitment, the circulation and use of illicit small arms and light weapons and illicit mining.

We wholeheartedly agree with the Secretary-General that first, the growing numbers of young men and women who lack the prospect of ever being able to work for a decent living are a major threat to the future of the subregion and, secondly, that the shocking levels of youth unemployment and the desperation that accompanies it not only could undermine any progress that countries such as Sierra Leone may have made, but also carry a real risk of destroying the political and social structures of currently stable countries.

Experience over the past 10 years has taught us in West Africa that we can no longer remain complacent about the existence of a few pockets of stability here and there, while other spots of the region are collapsing as a result of prolonged armed conflict. Youth unemployment in West Africa must be addressed as a matter of priority at the national, regional and subregional levels. Indeed, measures to reduce youth unemployment should be regarded as key to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development. Those measures transcend the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. As we say in Sierra Leone, hundreds of thousands of young people never handled weapons. They were not combatants. They

need to be integrated — not necessarily reintegrated — into the mainstream of society.

Of course, we agree with the Secretary-General that the primary responsibility for promoting peace and stability in the region rests with West African leaders and communities themselves. However, we should emphasize that we in West Africa already have in place appropriate institutions and mechanisms for the promotion of regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration, such as ECOWAS and the Mano River Union. In spite of obvious constraints, they have already demonstrated a propensity — indeed, the capability — for conflict prevention, development and even peacekeeping. We in Sierra Leone know what ECOWAS did for us during those dark, dark days before — and I emphasize before — the deployment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

What those regional and subregional organizations need most is the continued and sustained support of the international community. For its part, the Security Council must continue to monitor responses to and implementation of the recommendations it has formulated for strengthening collaboration among the various United Nations institutions, agencies, programmes and partners. The emphasis should remain on an integrated approach to conflict prevention and development in West Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): May I first thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address this body on behalf of the Group of African States.

I wish to express our appreciation to you for convening yet another important meeting of the Security Council on cross-border issues in West Africa. It is heartwarming for us that this subject is being discussed under the Beninois presidency and steered by you. That is an indication of your country's commitment to the goals of peace, security, stability and progress in our subregion and the African continent as a whole.

We are also grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his continuing interest in the best approaches towards the resolution of conflicts in the region. His exertions reflect the shared desire to make West Africa and, indeed, Africa as a whole crisis-free.

Conflicts in the West African subregion have claimed many lives and rendered thousands of people traumatized and homeless. Generations of our youth have been sucked into those conflicts and lost their childhood and innocence. Women have been abused and exploited. Indeed, the devastation wreaked by those conflicts is writ large on the destroyed cities and infrastructure of affected countries. Worse still, their consequences have been felt beyond the immediate theatres of operation, compounding the challenges created by the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, increasing desertification and environmental degradation, and a crippling debt burden.

While significant progress has been and continues to be made in resolving those conflicts, the subregion remains vulnerable. We therefore share the Secretary-General's assessment of the desirability of an integrated and coordinated approach to conflict prevention. Elements of that approach, identified in the report, include better collaboration among the United Nations entities in the region through the exchange of information and analysis and joint planning; the reactivation of the Mano River Union; the consolidated appeals process for West Africa; and joint action by the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union.

For our countries, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a major scourge. The unrestrained access to those weapons by individuals and groups has fuelled conflicts with attendant cross-border crimes, including armed banditry. Those weapons have also proved to be a great disincentive to non-State actors to follow the path of peace through negotiation.

On our own, we, the States members of ECOWAS and the African Union, are constrained in effectively countering the consequences of proliferation of those weapons, which are manufactured outside the region and imported into our countries by non-State actors, in collaboration with arms producers and suppliers. Our current efforts, amply demonstrated by our strict adherence to the ECOWAS moratorium on the

importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa, as well as by the creation of the new ECOWAS Small Arms Unit, need the clear support and action of other members of the international community to achieve the desired goal.

The progress made so far in the negotiation of a draft treaty on marking and tracing by the ad hoc group constituted for that purpose should spur Member States to overcome the remaining obstacles to the early conclusion of those negotiations. That would ensure that an agreed text can be presented for adoption by the General Assembly this year. Meanwhile, we join the Secretary-General in inviting our development partners to provide funds to ECOWAS to enable its new Small Arms Control Programme to effectively take off.

The time has also come to identify individuals, corporations, groups and countries that have been implicated in the illegal exportation of small arms and light weapons to our subregion, in violation of arms embargos imposed by this Council and in clear disregard of the ECOWAS moratorium. We share the Secretary-General's assessment of the need for the Council to produce a "naming and shaming" list of such individuals, corporations, groups and countries, cognizant that this would help reduce, if not totally stamp out, the traffic in small arms and light weapons in our subregion. By our subjecting such culprits to prosecution for attendant crimes, the cause of peace and justice in our region would be well served. Moreover, it would serve notice of the determination of the Council to stop that blood trade and to act consistent with its interest in the subject.

The need to take into account specific local socio-economic and geopolitical factors in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process has been recognized in the Secretary-General's report. Obviously, such an approach would have to incorporate such groups or areas as child combatants, foreign combatants, female combatants, military groups, monitoring components and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in countries not at war but deeply affected by armed conflicts in the region. The ultimate goal should be the social and economic reintegration of former disarmed combatants, including women and children, into society so as to ensure the stability and security of the affected States. We wish, in that regard, to draw attention to the success stories in Sierra Leone and Liberia, where demobilized child soldiers have been reunited with their families and/or repatriated to their countries of origin. Those are success stories rarely reported in the mainstream media, but they attest to the valuable work of the United Nations and the engagement of the Security Council.

It is evident from the report of the Secretary-General that West Africa is confronted with a major refugee and displaced persons problem. Only a comprehensive view of those problems will facilitate a permanent solution, with affected countries driving the process. As stated in the report, such a solution should include security sector reform, including support for a regional position on "the phenomenon of violent military adventurism to seize power" (*S/2005/86, para. 34*). It should also be consistent with the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of people and goods.

We believe that close cooperation between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and ECOWAS on investigation techniques used by national law enforcement agencies will complement current efforts by the Governments of the subregion in those areas. In addition, the existing initiative entitled "Integrated strategies for sensitive border areas in West Africa" — which includes the participation of the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ECOWAS, development partners, civil society groups and concerned United Nations country teams and peace missions — is focusing attention on those problems in sensitive border zones. If fully implemented, the initiative should help prevent possible outbreaks of violence, restore trust and confidence in inter-State relations and promote peace and stability in West Africa.

Finally, the challenges of cross-border problems in West Africa can be effectively addressed only when opportunities for economic growth and development are enhanced. Like most other developing countries, the countries in our region are concerned not only with the visible consequences of conflicts, human rights abuses and poor governance, but also with the state of our economies, and especially that of our young people. The graphic picture painted of youth unemployment and its potential negative impact on the social fabric, peace, stability and security of our subregion is indicative of the scope of the challenges we face. It is therefore our expectation that this debate will strengthen the resolve of the Council, as well as

that of the international community at large, to take action on these issues.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his kind words addressed to me and my country, Benin.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Mali. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Diarra (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to congratulate Benin for convening this open meeting of the Security Council on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa.

We associate ourselves with the statement just made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation congratulates the Secretary-General on his progress report contained in document S/2005/86 of 11 February 2005. We also congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa for his presentation.

The instability that has prevailed in our subregion for over 15 years has required regular monitoring by the United Nations, in particular by the Security Council. The various Security Council missions to the subregion in recent years clearly attest to the concern of this body about the precarious regional peace and security situation. The establishment of the United Nations Office for West Africa was properly intended to enhance the contribution of the United Nations to security and peace in the subregion. In the Secretary-General's previous report on this matter (S/2004/200), the Office identified a series of problems besetting the subregion and causing instability. Most of them had one thing in common: their cross-border nature. In addition to the work of the various United Nations peacekeeping and political missions managing existing crisis situations, my delegation welcomes the initiatives taken by the Office to develop coherent conflict-prevention strategies.

The multidimensional nature of the problems calls for close cooperation among humanitarian, military and political actors. My delegation is therefore pleased that steps are being taken to implement those strategies in cooperation with various partners. The interaction of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other United Nations bodies with the heads of the various peacekeeping missions makes it possible to carry out an exchange of experiences in order to foster greater consistency in managing their activities.

As evidenced in the joint work programme for 2004-2005, cooperation between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations Office for West Africa will help to improve the capacity of ECOWAS in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management, post-conflict stabilization and the development of a strategy to combat youth unemployment. All of those things are priorities for the subregion. My delegation welcomes the involvement of the European Union in that process, which should ultimately lead to a plan of action in May 2005. The measures to be included in the plan of action will facilitate unhindered cross-border movement of people and goods in the States of the region, which is an important aspect of subregional integration. Those measures will also aim at protecting children in armed conflict.

Civil society is increasingly involved in designing and implementing plans of action dealing with cross-border issues. In that connection, my delegation welcomes the establishment of a coordination centre for civil society in the ECOWAS secretariat and the setting up of the West Africa Civil Society Forum. The involvement of the private sector through the Secretariat's Global Compact office in the search for peace and stability in West Africa — especially through the promotion of commercial practices that reflect the needs of local communities, in particular those affected by conflict — is an innovative approach that will strengthen solutions that have already been implemented.

In assessing the progress made in solving cross-border problems, the report of the Secretary-General refers to the creation of the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme, whose purpose is to transform the ECOWAS moratorium into a legally binding instrument and to strengthen the capacities of national commissions — to which end ECOWAS has established a Small Arms Unit. My delegation supports the report's recommendation that generous contributions be provided to that new structure so that it can discharge its mandate. The report also proposes other measures to reduce the circulation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion: strengthening the mandate of peacekeeping operations to monitor and

implement arms embargoes; institutionalizing the practice of marking and tracing the weapons used in those missions; and punishing those guilty of violations. Those measures can have an impact if they are effectively implemented.

My delegation encourages the effort to establish greater interaction among the various peacekeeping missions in the subregion in order to harmonize disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes and eliminate the contradictions that exist between them. We agree with the Secretary-General that such a regional approach could help reduce cross-border movements of combatants and weapons. It could also serve as a way to take joint action whenever possible. Moreover, the reintegration and reconstruction elements also need to be strengthened in order to avoid any possibility of the resumption of conflict. In that connection, particular focus should be placed on women and children.

The joint activities of ECOWAS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on behalf of refugees and displaced persons should create conditions for voluntary return when circumstances so permit, or integration in the host countries. In the latter case, the host community should be given support by the international community.

The previous report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/200) revealed the problems caused by security forces where there is no rule of law. Such forces can be a danger to the constitutional order, stability and respect for freedom, rather than defending them. The need for security sector reform is sorely needed in some countries, as are training and outreach activities.

Sensitive border areas deserve special attention from the Governments of the subregion and the United Nations. Governments of the subregion must work together to develop integrated strategies to deal with the problems of these regions; those activities should be aimed at stabilizing those areas. My delegation is pleased to note that ECOWAS, the United Nations Office for West Africa and other partners launched such an initiative in October 2004. We encourage them to implement it for the sake of the well-being of the inhabitants of border areas and of the people of the subregion as a whole.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Mali for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

The next speaker is the representative of Niger. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Moutari (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Sir, your colleague and friend, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of Niger, very much wished to be here today to participate in this discussion on behalf of the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Unfortunately, developments in Togo have meant that she must remain in our subregion. She has therefore instructed me to convey her regrets, and to thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Security Council for having convened this public debate on cross-border issues in West Africa.

On her behalf, I also welcome the considerable attention that the Council is paying to the problems of West Africa in general, and to border-related problems in particular.

There could be no more suitable occasion to discuss these issues, since today is the eve of the one hundred twentieth anniversary of the conclusion of the Berlin Conference, that gathering of colonial Powers on Africa — without the presence of Africans — held from 15 November 1884 to 26 February 1885, which resulted in the carving up of the so-called black continent into colonial possessions that were subsequently to become independent, within borders that are straitjackets for each of the States concerned, while also constituting, in many cases, sources of discord among them.

For a regional economic community such as ECOWAS, whose primary mission is to provide for the well-being of its people through economic and social integration, the question of borders and their attendant problems is, of course, a matter of major concern. This concern becomes a source of anxiety as it affects the mobility of populations both in times of peace and in times of crisis.

I wish to share with Council members, our comments and our concerns, but also our hopes and wishes, as regards one of the most recurrent cross-border problems that our region must tackle, and which has to do with the mobility of our populations. There is a high degree of mobility among the populations of the ECOWAS area. Movements are prompted largely by the need to seek employment, or by family reasons. According to studies on this issue, at the end of the

1990s, 11 per cent of the population of West Africa, Nigeria excluded, resided in a State member of the Community other than their country of origin. Moreover, 30 to 40 per cent of the inhabitants of the region, again Nigeria excepted, no longer lived in their district or community of origin.

Generally speaking, there are favourite destinations in West Africa, especially when there is a need to find a professional occupation, or to buy or sell a consumer product. The following movements are to be seen: there is great movement from Burkina Faso, from Mali and from Niger to Côte d'Ivoire; fairly significant movement from Guinea to Senegal; and a fairly high level of migration from Senegal to the Gambia.

Migration in West Africa is either voluntary — caused by the quest for better living conditions; labour migration — or forced, as a result of conflict or of natural catastrophe or disaster. The displacement of populations from one country to another is often made difficult by the growing number of hindrances to the movement of migrants. Practices that are being pursued at our border posts and the many roadblocks on our roads are barriers and burdens for the population. As a result of such practices and of the roadblocks, road travel is needlessly prolonged and taxes the travel budget of the people concerned, while also, of course, impinging on their most fundamental rights.

Populations are thus obliged to bribe road safety officers or those manning border posts, even when they are in compliance with the legislation governing movement from one country to another. Extortion and abuse at the border posts have often provoked a revolt among neighbouring populations, leading to crises between two adjacent countries.

It should also be noted that the purpose of such mobility is not always lawful. Movements also arise because of large-scale banditry and cross-border crime. Thus, as a result of the porous nature of our borders, the lack of skill among border agents or the greed of some of those agents, some criminals manage to exploit this mobility in order to engage in unlawful activities, or to evade the security forces. Thus, many armed gangs are able to hide out or even disappear after having committed abuses in a neighbouring country. Developments in the trafficking of goods, weapons, vehicles and human beings, especially women and children, attest to the scale of the cross-border problems experienced by West Africa.

The management of border areas is thus a major problem, because, for the local populations residing there, the borders, as drawn, cannot alter the centuries-long relations and bonds of kinship shared with people on the other side. Management becomes a problem when farmland or a service-provider located on the other side of the border is involved, thus requiring daily crossings.

Such complaints and grievances have become widespread among our populations, and the many meetings of the security services of bordering countries demonstrate our national Governments concern at this state of affairs, which is a curb on economic integration, which should chiefly benefit these populations.

In order to meet those shortcomings, ECOWAS has adopted a set of measures: the Protocol relating to free movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment, which includes three phases — right of entry and abolition of visa, right of residence and right of establishment; the Protocol relating to the definition of community citizenship, which defines the conditions for community citizenship; the decision establishing a travel certificate for ECOWAS member States; the decision regarding the establishment of a harmonized immigration and emigration form in ECOWAS member States; and finally, the decision relating to the adoption of an ECOWAS passport.

In addition to those measures — whose implementation has seen some significant progress — ECOWAS has taken the initiative of developing a programme called "border countries", whose main objective is to accelerate the economic integration process through local integration, enabling border populations to share some goods and services because of their socio-economic and cultural homogeneity. With that programme, ECOWAS intends to begin, in the context of regional integration, a new, broader and more dynamic approach and a new local development plan.

Addressing and resolving issues related to cross-border problems is a major challenge for ECOWAS in the context of its regional integration mission. It is absolutely essential that those issues be taken into account in ECOWAS programmes and policies in order to establish lasting peace in the region, which alone

can secure an environment conducive to economic and social development.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Niger for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

I shall now give the floor to Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah to respond to comments made and questions raised.

Mr. Ould-Abdallah (*spoke in French*): As it is late, I will not be long-winded. I would just like to thank Council members and the African speakers for the attention they are giving to the problems of the region and for the support they expressed. My colleagues and I will be seeking to implement the main elements in the statements, and we will be communicating bilaterally with the States concerned and in the next report of the Secretary-General.

The President (*spoke in French*): After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has carefully reviewed the progress report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/86), dated 11 February 2005, on the implementation of the recommendations of the Council on cross-border and subregional problems in West Africa and reaffirms the statement of its President, S/PRST/2004/7 of 25 March 2004.

"The Council notes with appreciation the enhanced cooperation among the various United Nations political and peacekeeping missions in the subregion and looks forward to receiving the Secretary-General's forthcoming report on inter-mission cooperation. The Council also welcomes the growing and constructive partnership between the United Nations system, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), individual Member States and key bilateral and multilateral development partners, as well as civil society organizations, including women's organizations, aiming at addressing the many complex challenges confronting the West African subregion.

"The Council reiterates its belief that action on cross-border and subregional issues should take place as part of a wider strategy of conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding in the subregion. The Council thus also encourages the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) to further promote an integrated and joint subregional approach with ECOWAS and the African Union, as well as with other key international partners and civil society organizations.

"The Council welcomes the encouraging prospects for the reactivation of the Mano River Union and the resumption of dialogue among its member States, notably on ways to deal with mercenaries. It welcomes also initiatives taken by ECOWAS to establish a Small Arms Unit and to adopt a new Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP), and its ongoing efforts to transform the Moratorium signed in Abuja on 31 October 1998, on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, into a binding convention.

"The Council welcomes the decision of the European Commission on 2 December 2004 to assist ECOWAS in implementing its plans to combat illicit dissemination of small arms. The Council reiterates its call on all Member States and organizations in a position to do so to extend further assistance to ECOWAS in this field. The Council calls on arms-producing and exporting countries and West African States to explore ways in which they can ensure the implementation of the Moratorium.

"The Council calls on Member States and key international partners to explore practical ways of assisting ECOWAS in enhancing its capacities in the areas of conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacekeeping, including through the provision of technical expertise, training programmes and logistical and financial resources. In this connection, the Council reaffirms the crucial importance of the reintegration of ex-combatants, taking into account the special needs of child soldiers and women, in order to reverse the culture of violence and create an enabling environment for national reconciliation in countries emerging from conflict, and reiterates its call to the international community to provide adequate funding to this end.

"The Council underlines that ongoing or emerging crises in West Africa are a threat to the subregional stability and in this regard notes with deep concern the tensions emerging and ongoing in some countries over the transfer of power, involving members of security and armed forces, and which may further obstruct efforts to stabilize the subregion.

"The Council recalls in this regard the African Union position on unconstitutional changes of Governments, as stated in the 1999 Algiers Declaration and the 2000 Lomé Declaration.

"The Council welcomes the action taken by ECOWAS and the African Union to address these issues.

"The Council expresses its deep concern about the involvement of individuals including those from security and armed forces in such illicit activities as smuggling of arms, drugs and natural resources, human trafficking, extortion at roadblocks and money-laundering, in the context of mismanagement in the administration of justice, and weak government capacity to fight against criminal activities and impunity. The Council stresses the need to pay special attention to those critical issues that have direct bearing on efforts to enhance peace, stability and democratic governance in West African countries.

"The Council emphasizes the need to pursue security sector reforms aiming at improving civil-military relations in countries emerging from conflict situations and creating a culture of peace and stability and promoting the rule of law. In this regard, the Council requests UNOWA to further explore with interested Governments and organizations ways in which security sector reforms could be formulated and implemented.

"In this regard, the Council welcomes the ongoing efforts of ECOWAS, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to improve border control mechanisms in West Africa by facilitating the flow of information among national law enforcement authorities, as well as regional networking and cooperation on the law enforcement issues.

"The Council reiterates the importance of curbing the growing risks of instability along some border areas. The Council, therefore, encourages UNOWA to facilitate, in close cooperation with the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat and its member States concerned, the implementation of the strategies developed for sensitive border zones in the subregion and calls on the donors to support these efforts.

"The Council stresses the need to help West African States to curb illicit cross-border activities and to strengthen the capacities of the civil society groups working to promote a cross-border culture of non-violence and peace.

"The Council further emphasizes the need to generate economic activities and foster development as a means of promoting sustainable peace in the subregion. It urges international donors to assist ECOWAS States to address that need.

"The Security Council reaffirms the urgency of finding lasting solutions to the problem of youth unemployment in order to prevent the recruitment of such youth by illegal armed groups. In this connection, the Council requests the Secretary-General to include in his next progress report practical recommendations on how best to tackle the problem of youth unemployment.

"The Council urges the donor countries, international organizations and civil society to address the dire humanitarian situation in many parts of the subregion and to provide adequate resources in the framework of the consolidated appeals process 2005 for West Africa as part of a regional humanitarian response strategy to improve the human security of the people in dire need of protection or those whose coping capacities are close to exhaustion.

"The Council expresses its intention to keep these issues under review and requests the Secretary-General to report on them regularly through his reports on the United Nations missions in the subregion."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/9.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 2.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5132

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5132nd meeting

Monday, 28 February 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Adechi	(Benin)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Fendrick

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (S/2005/99)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-25017 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (S/2005/99)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Indonesia, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the Senior Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and Head of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Hasegawa to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2005/99, which contains the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor. I should also like to draw members' attention to document S/2005/103, which contains a letter dated 23 February 2005 from the representative of Timor-Leste addressed to the Secretary-General.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and Head of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hasegawa.

Mr. Hasegawa: It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address the Council on the progress made in consolidating peace and building democratic institutions in Timor-Leste. As guided by resolution 1573 (2004) of 16 November 2004, we have intensified efforts to implement the exit strategy by increasing Timorese involvement and ownership at all levels. At the same time, following the suggestions of several Council members, we have finalized the task of the transition working groups to assess the accomplishments and identify remaining challenges.

Today, let me first start with recent political and security developments and then address the status of the progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). Finally, I will share with the Council my own assessment of the remaining challenges identified by the transition working groups.

The first elections since independence took place in December 2004 in an atmosphere free of intimidation for village chiefs and councils in the districts of Bobonaro and Oecussi. The next round of elections will be held in March in Lautem, Baucau and Manatuto districts, followed by the remaining eight districts from April to June.

On the diplomatic front, Timor-Leste has continued to make progress in strengthening its relations with neighbouring countries, particularly Indonesia. Indonesia and Timor-Leste held a summit meeting in December and enhanced the relationship of mutual confidence and appreciation when President

Gusmão delivered to President Yudhoyono a check from the people of Timor-Leste for tsunami relief efforts. Recently, the two countries have established the Truth and Friendship Commission to deal with, among other things, crimes committed in 1999.

Tangible progress was also made in building democratic institutions in Timor-Leste. The organic law of the Superior Council for Defense and Security was approved by Parliament on 14 February and promulgated by the President on 17 February. The law, together with the organic law of the Council of State, represents another step in strengthening the principal organs of sovereignty. The draft law on freedom of assembly and demonstration is expected to be adopted shortly. The Council of Ministers also approved on 9 February laws on foreign and domestic investments. Another praiseworthy accomplishment of the Government is the drafting of the law on the petroleum fund, which will ensure accountability of petroleum revenue management.

In spite of the tangible progress made on many fronts, a number of major challenges indeed remain. The most demanding challenge is the land-border demarcation negotiations. A provisional line comprising more than 95 per cent of the borderline has been agreed upon at the technical level, yet it has not been possible for the two countries to resolve the remaining borderline issues and to establish a transportation corridor linking Oecussi with the rest of Timor-Leste.

As the second transition working group has pointed out, the fight against corruption is a newly emerging challenge for the country that requires not only the formulation and implementation of legislation, but also the establishment of ethical standards and a culture of transparency and accountability. The National Parliament is expected very shortly to appoint a long-awaited Provedor for Human Rights and Justice. That will be a big step towards governance based on transparency and accountability not only for human rights, but also in th fight against corruption. Furthermore, I hope that it will be possible to adopt a law on the office of the inspector general, along with other laws to establish the high administrative, tax and audit court and other administrative courts of first instance.

Let me now turn to the status of the implementation of the UNMISET mandate. On the first programme — regarding institution-building — efforts have continued to made and progress has been registered. Some State institutions are now less dependent on international experts. For example, the total number of UNMISET international advisers in the finance and banking institutions has declined from 35 two years ago, when I arrived in Timor-Leste, to 16 last year. By May of this year, we should be able to reduce the number further, to nine. Nevertheless, it has become clear that several ministries and State institutions continue to require international advisers to function effectively. That is most evident in justice, legal and security matters, as well as in the finance and monetary sector, where highly specialized expertise is required. The Prime Minister has therefore requested the retention of 58 "most critical" posts. While recognizing the continuing need for many of those posts, closer scrutiny on our part suggests that perhaps 45 posts may be sufficient.

In order to identify possible "responsible hands," we have embarked upon intense consultations with bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. UNDP is making arrangements to make available the resources to fund 9 out of 58 posts, but only for a period of six months. The World Bank intends to implement the planning and financial capacity-building programme by early next year, when it will know how many posts it can indeed fund. Other than those promises, there has been no firm commitment. Without some form of continued international assistance, it is almost certain that several State institutions will not be able to discharge their sovereign functions adequately, if the most critical civilian advisors are discontinued after May 2005. We hope that bilateral development partners will be able to make concrete commitments at the development partners conference, which is to be held in Dili on 25 and 26 April.

I shall now turn to the second programme, on support for the development of law enforcement in Timor-Leste. United Nations police continue to play their advisory role, focusing on the improvement of policing capability, professional development and the institutional strengthening of the Timor-Leste national police. The professional skill development plan is now concluding its second phase of training national police officers in all 13 districts. United Nations police advisers are working closely with bilateral partners on

developing the national police of Timor-Leste, including through the Timor-Leste Police Development Project — which is sponsored jointly by Australia and the United Kingdom — the delivery of the "training the trainers" course and the design of a course for station commanders.

Despite significant progress made in training officers of the Timor-Leste national police on human rights issues, the excessive use of force and professional misconduct by the national police remain major challenges. Technical advisers of the United Nations police are advising and training national police officers to deal with a large backlog of professional ethics cases at the headquarters of the national police.

Let me now turn to the third programme, on the security and stability of the country. Timor-Leste has remained relatively calm and stable, but the operational environment remains fragile. Members of the Timor-Leste national police and the Timor-Leste national defence forces (F-FDTL) have clashed in recent months. Armed elements with possible links to ex-militia groups made incursions into Timor-Leste in January and February, posing a potential threat to the security of the country. The border remains difficult to control, and illegal trading, smuggling and illegal crossings continue to take place. There is a need to enhance the border-management capacity of the Border Patrol Unit (BPU).

The absence of an agreed border and a legal framework to manage the border after 20 May 2005 will add considerably to that problem. Despite our hopes, it remains highly unlikely that a final land-border agreement can be concluded by 20 May. The critical vulnerability remains the effectiveness of the Border Patrol Unit to maintain the security situation along the border. The BPU assumed border management responsibilities on 20 May 2004, but has not yet gained sufficient experience, confidence or capacity to manage border affairs alone, without the support of United Nations military liaison groups. Its relationship with the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) is still at an initial stage of development, relying heavily on the facilitation of military liaison officers.

The UNMISET military component will continue to assist with the development of the F-FDTL through its skills and knowledge transfer programme, covering five training modules. That programme complements various existing bilateral arrangements. At the same time, the military component is also assisting the development of the BPU, in cooperation with United Nations police. The military liaison group began providing six training courses out of a total of 23 modules, which will conclude in March. In view of the lack of adequate border arrangements and the insufficient capacity of national security agencies, I consider it necessary to retain at least 35 military liaison officers.

The success of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Timor-Leste was largely due to Indonesia's genuine acceptance of the independence of Timor-Leste and the determination of the people and the leaders of Timor-Leste to build peace and stability anchored on the principles of democratic governance. It is in that context that the international community may need to address the remaining challenges. According to the findings of the transition working groups, there remain major challenges in four areas: security and stability; the development of police capability; the public administration and justice system; and human rights and promotion of good governance. All of those are important in the post-conflict situation. If the United Nations totally withdraws the military liaison officers and police trainers upon the completion of UNMISET's mandate, on 20 May, Timor-Leste may face insurmountable challenges on its path towards peace and stability. I therefore fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation to maintain a United Nations mission, with an appropriately scaled-down structure as described in the report before the Council (S/2005/99), for a period of up to 12 months, until 20 May 2006. That period could be shortened if, within that time frame, bilateral and multilateral arrangements are identified to assume the critical responsibilities currently performed by UNMISET.

Just before I departed Dili for New York, legal advisers brought to my attention the urgent need to lay out basic legal frameworks for several ministries. Similarly, the Timorese authorities have asked me how they can combat emerging corruption by not only strictly adhering to the rule of law but also implementing disciplinary measures. Here is a country that has been created by the United Nations and whose national leaders are eager to build transparent and accountable State institutions. And they are asking for continued support from the Security Council, which they consider to be their guardian. In a separate

meeting with the Secretary of Defence and the commanders of the East Timorese national defence force (F-FDTL), they pleaded that the United Nations not abandon them, reminding me that the national defence force had been created by the United Nations under the leadership of the late Sergio Vieira de Mello when he was exercising sovereign power.

Before I conclude my statement, let me comment briefly on the serious-crimes process. The prosecutors made strenuous efforts and ended all investigations in November 2004. The trials will be completed by May of this year, as mandated by Security Council resolution 1543 (2004). The Serious Crimes Unit and the Special Panels are in the process of preparing a database that will allow electronic searches of all of the Unit's cases. Increasing national ownership remains important, as approximately 340 indicted persons remain outside Timor-Leste and may return in the coming years.

It is clear that the serious-crimes process will not be able to respond fully to the desire for justice on behalf of all the victims of the 1999 violence. In that regard, the Secretary-General has established a commission of experts that will assess the outcome of the two judicial processes under way in Jakarta and Dili. The commission of experts will also consider ways in which its analysis could be of assistance to the Truth and Friendship Commission. I look forward to receiving the commission's recommendations to the Secretary-General.

The tolerance of the people of Timor-Leste and the balanced leadership exercised by President Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, National Parliament President Francisco "Lu-Olo" Guterres and Foreign Minister José Ramos-Horta have enabled Timor-Leste to move forward steadily on its path to peace and stability. It is clear from my close interaction with the Timorese leaders how much they appreciate and respect the constructive role played by the United Nations. I am most pleased today to see Timorese Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta and Ambassador José Luis Guterres in this Chamber.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation for the valuable work carried out by my Deputy, Atul Khare, and by all the staff in the civilian, police and military components of UNMISET for their dedicated efforts in discharging the mandate of the Mission in its consolidation phase.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Hasegawa for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Senior Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste): Before I deliver my written remarks, I should like to express my sincere condolences to the people and the Government of Bangladesh and to the United Nations family for the brutal murder of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We particularly feel the peacekeepers' tragic death because we cooperated closely with Bangladeshi peacekeepers in my own country, Timor-Leste, when Bangladesh contributed an army engineer battalion in 2000 and 2001. To the people and the Government of Bangladesh and to the United Nations family, our most sincere condolences.

I should also like to say a few special words about your country, Mr. President. You might not be aware that I visited Benin in 1977. Then an unknown young representative of a national liberation movement, I was there at the invitation of President Mathieu Kerekou to participate in an international conference in solidarity with Benin in the aftermath of an attempted mercenary invasion of the country. When Benin served on the Security Council from 1976 to 1977, it was one of our greatest defenders, and we will never forget that. So it is quite ironic and interesting that, more than 25 years later, you are presiding over the Council at a time when the Council must make some critical decisions regarding the future of the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste. We trust that under your guidance the Security Council will once again make wise decisions, consistent with the decisions it has made in the past five years, in ensuring that the gains we have seen in my country will continue to be consolidated. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I have a written text — some 11 single-spaced pages — that might take some time to read. Therefore, I shall try to summarize many of my points in order to make the most of the Council's time.

First of all, I should like to recall that, when I addressed the Council a year ago, on 20 February 2004, I had the audacity to say that I do not always agree 100 per cent with the reports of the Secretary-General, in spite of our respect and affection for him

and for the people around him, just as I would not say that we agree 100 per cent with what the Bible says. Therefore, forgive me if I have some disagreements with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. However, those disagreements are somewhat minor.

When I see the reduced figures proposed in the report for continued United Nations assistance, I recall that my Prime Minister, Mr. Alkatiri, had clearly highlighted our minimal requests to the Secretary-General and to the heads of State or Government of your countries. Those requests had been made after a very careful assessment of our situation and our needs. They represent the barest minimum of required assistance secured through assessed contributions.

Let me begin with the requirement for a continued presence of military liaison officers. I am told that currently the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) has 42 military liaison officers, who are undertaking the facilitation of exchanges between our Border Patrol Unit (BPU) and the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), monitoring developments along the land border that could have an impact on overall security and stability, and providing mentoring and coaching to the members of the BPU.

The only legal agreement governing the interaction and exchanges between the border security agencies of our two countries is the military liaison arrangement concluded between the United Nations security force and the TNI. We have not been able to put in place any successor arrangement, as we have been preoccupied with defining our land border as a first step towards cooperative border arrangements. And we have regrettably come to the conclusion that the capacities of the BPU, although developing, need to be further strengthened.

Indonesia has made it amply clear that the main security agency on its side of the border will be the TNI — the Indonesian army — as is the case with other land borders of Indonesia. That implies that the training of the BPU needs to be provided not only by police officers but also by military liaison officers, who are most conversant with military matters. It seems clear to us that if the military liaison officers have been given additional training responsibilities, their numbers should be increased or at least maintained at the same level.

I have been asked whether the element guaranteeing the security and support of the military liaison officers could be reduced. I must state frankly that if our national security agencies were capable of assuring the safety and security of the liaison officers, we would not be asking for their continued presence at all. We are not, unfortunately, in a position to guarantee their safety and security, and that has been made clear in the letter from Prime Minister Alkatiri. The report of the Secretary-General proposes a 144-strong element for that purpose.

On the other hand, I can assure the Council that if any country in the region were to offer stand-by arrangements for evacuation and other logistical support, Timor-Leste would be keen to discuss such an arrangement. While we hear from some friends that Timor-Leste could be more effectively assisted through bilateral arrangements, we are puzzled that so far we have not heard any positive reaction to the very innovative suggestion that some of our closest neighbors provide a stand-by evacuation force that could be activated at very short notice. The negative reaction, or silence, in regard to our creative proposal makes us even more skeptical when we hear about bilateral arrangements in lieu of a multilateral mechanism.

Before moving on, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Council for having stationed the 125-strong Brazilian International Response Unit in Timor-Leste since last May. Fortunately, we have not needed to request its assistance over the last few months. Moreover, our own security agencies, particularly the Police Reserve Unit, have benefited from the training provided by the United Nations police and are functioning well in dealing with reports of movements and sightings of ex-militia elements, who are engaged in sporadic criminal activities.

The Council will be happy to hear that despite predictions to the contrary from some quarters, the elements of the National Police Reserve Unit have behaved with remarkable discipline and are deeply conscious of promoting and protecting the human rights of all, including those of the former militia and current criminal elements. It was for that reason that we decided not to seek the continued retention of the International Response Unit and agree with the recommendation that it may be withdrawn when the current mandate of UNMISET ends.

Allow me now to briefly touch upon our request for police trainers. We wish to see the emergence of a professional, ethical, accountable, responsive and dedicated police service in Timor-Leste. We are grateful to several bilateral and multilateral partners who are assisting us in this direction, particularly the initiative taken by Australia and the United Kingdom for the Timor-Leste Police Development Programme, and the United States, China and Malaysia. I am pleased to inform Council members that a significant number of East Timorese police officers will soon receive training in criminal investigation and traffic control in Indonesia.

Several areas such as forensics, the specialized units, investigations unit and the like are not covered at present by those initiatives. Hence we feel that the retention of the 62 police trainers deployed in those areas where multilateral and bilateral assistance is currently unlikely to become available is essential. I feel that the decision of the Secretariat to reduce the number of police trainers requested by more than a third may not be justified.

I would like to briefly outline our requirements for critical civilian advisers to strengthen the institutional capacity of our State institutions. Our own assessment indicates that nearly 68 advisers will be required. However, our friend, Mr. Hasegawa, who seemed to know the Security Council even better than I do, particularly advised me not even to think of asking the Council for any more than the 58 critical advisers currently deployed by UNMISET. We have reluctantly heeded his advice and refrained from projecting our actual requirements over and above the assistance being provided by several bilateral and multilateral partners, and have requested the Council to consider providing only 58 civilian advisers.

Let me say that one reason why we have insisted we need 68 advisors is because our experience with so-called voluntary contributions provided through bilateral arrangements has not been the most remarkable. When we in East Timor, in particular myself — and I am sure the Secretary-General and some other recipient countries have observed this; indeed we just need to ask our friend Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan and a few other countries — hear the phrase, "voluntary bilateral arrangements", it rarely means that those promises are going to be delivered. Therefore we are extremely skeptical when we are asked to rely on bilateral arrangements. Of course, we must pay due tribute to those countries who have really contributed to United Nations Development Programme funding to pay for advisers to assist our Government. But if we were to rely exclusively on bilateral funding, we would be in a very dire situation in my country with regard to ensuring the functioning and capacity-building of our institutions.

Our requests and the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General are also in line with the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (*A/59/565*). In its paragraph 224 the report of the High-level Panel clearly states, "failure to invest adequately in peacebuilding increases the odds that a country will relapse into conflict".

I am convinced that the Council, in its wisdom, will find the unity and resolve to provide Timor-Leste, through the United Nations and in a secure and guaranteed manner, with the modest but critical means to meet the challenges that lie before us.

I wish now to brief the Council on the joint efforts of the Governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia to resolve some of the issues of our common past, in particular that of the reported human rights violations that occurred in 1999, in the context of the 5 May Agreement between the United Nations, Indonesia and Portugal. More than anyone else, the two Governments are conscious of the need to deal with this burden of the past in a manner that our two peoples may accept. Hence, a Commission of Truth and Friendship was established by a decision of Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Xanana Gusmao and Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri during a meeting of the three leaders in Denpassar, Bali, on 14 December 2004.

Allow me to recall that following the events of 1999, both nations have taken actions within their respective jurisdictions to respond to the well-documented reports of human rights violations. In Indonesia, an Ad-Hoc Tribunal on Human Rights Violations in East Timor was established. Its work has not ended. In the meantime, the Indonesian parliament has passed a law establishing its own truth and reconciliation commission. In Timor-Leste we have responded to the need for truth and the desire for reconciliation with the establishment of the Commission on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, whose work has just ended. They are now preparing a final report. In Timor-Leste the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with the full legislative and

executive powers vested in the United Nations Transitional Administrator of East Timor, created the Serious Crimes Panel, to which Mr. Hasegawa has just referred.

Justice comes in a number of forms, criminal prosecution being the most common. Retributive justice demands legal prosecution or punishment, whereby the victim is the State, and the victim a witness for the State. It is adversarial and focused on the past. Restorative justice — the main focus of truth commissions — is about people, where the victims are the primary concern and not simply witnesses, and the perpetrator is compelled to truth.

Timor-Leste requires the focus to be on restorative justice so that primary attention is given to people, participation, dialogue, needs and the future. Our past is both tragic and bloody; if we are to reach back into the past, how far do we go?

The greatest act of justice and blessing bestowed on the people of East Timor is our freedom. Today we are free. That is justice, for there can be no greater justice than our freedom.

Indonesia, too, is free as never before and is beginning to take steps to confront its own past in order to extricate itself from a pervasive culture of violence, abuse and impunity. Tens of thousands of Indonesians were jailed, killed, tortured, branded as "communists" and stigmatized for most of their lives. Hence, Indonesia, in its national parliament, adopted its own truth and reconciliation law.

Timor-Leste and Indonesia have a long way to go towards consolidating democracy and the rule of law. Timor-Leste is starting anew, from the ashes of the violence of 1999. Indonesia, too, is starting anew, and is struggling to reform its judiciary and armed forces.

Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world, home to 230 million people; and now it is the third largest democracy, however imperfect. In 2004, that multi-ethnic and multicultural nation went through two democratic elections, which were regarded by all impartial observers as truly free and open. Radical Islamic parties failed to make any gains. Yet, overall, the democratic experiment in Indonesia is still an incipient and fragile one, and there is no guarantee that those elements will not gain influence and, ultimately, power.

The East Timorese and the international community must accept and understand the complex challenges faced by the elected civilian leaders in Indonesia in trying to consolidate their democratic experiment with prudent reforms. Excessive outside pressure on elected civilian leaders to meet the expectations of the international community to have a credible prosecutorial and trial process — that is, the jailing of senior military officers — as desirable as that may be for some, could result in unrest within the armed forces, thus undermining stability and the entire democratic experiment in the largest Muslim country in the world.

Indonesian leaders and the Indonesian people have shown a remarkable sense of pragmatism in welcoming Timor-Leste as a sovereign, independent nation. Former President Abdurrahman Wahid visited Timor-Leste in 2000, and then President Megawati Soekarnoputri attended our independence celebration in 2002. The Indonesian military leadership has displayed overall good faith in cooperating with the United Nations civilian and military authorities in Timor-Leste since soon after their evacuation from the territory in 1999.

The several hundred armed elements that fled to Indonesian West Timor in 1999 have been deterred from destabilizing Timor-Leste thanks to the determined policy of the Indonesian Government to contribute to Timor-Leste's stability and to close cooperation between the leaderships of the peacekeeping force and the Indonesia Military Forces (TNI).

Land border demarcation talks between our two sides have progressed in record time, and have now reached some 96 per cent completion. Our two Governments are determined to finalize the land border demarcation process, but we cannot anticipate when that process will be completed.

Hundreds of individuals of East Timorese origin continue to be on the Indonesian civil service payroll, and several hundred others continue to be on active duty in the Indonesian national police and army, without suffering discrimination.

We are aware that it is impossible to satisfy the needs of all victims and that it is impossible to provide perfect justice. The cross-jurisdictional nature of the conflict in question lends support to the argument that, in this case, a Truth and Friendship Commission is best placed in a bi-national institutional context. It is time

for Timor-Leste and Indonesia to deal with our shared and turbulent past, while securing our democratic future.

Allow me briefly to share with Council members some elements of the terms of reference for our Truth and Friendship Commission, with a cautionary note that, while the document has been thoroughly reviewed at ministerial level, it still requires the signature of our two Presidents and our Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers for it to become official and valid. We anticipate that, in the next week or two, our two Presidents and Prime Ministers will initial the terms of reference of our Truth and Friendship Commission.

Because that document runs to more or less three pages in my speech, I will simply summarize it in one minute. In the discussions of the terms of reference we have held with our Indonesian colleagues and friends, the two sides have been very conscious that the terms of reference of the Truth and Friendship Commission must, above all, be credible and must gain the acceptance of our own peoples, both in Timor-Leste and in Indonesia. Members of the joint Commission will number roughly 10; a final decision on this is to be made by the two Presidents. They will be drawn from independent individuals: academics, human rights experts, jurists and historians from both Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

Commission members will have full immunity in the conduct of their work. They will have freedom of movement in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, unrestricted access to any documentation available from existing sources — namely, from the Indonesian Ad Hoc Human Rights Tribunal, from our serious crimes process and from our Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation — and will have the authority to interview any individual in Indonesia or Timor-Leste they deem necessary to provide additional information for their work. The Commission might have one to two years of work and will finalize its work in a report submitted to our two Presidents, who will then submit it to our respective parliaments.

In deciding what would be the best mechanism for our two Governments and countries to deal with the events of the past, we for our part also took into consideration the views of many. My President and I spent a considerable amount of time consulting with church leaders, members of civil society, non-governmental organizations and all political parties represented in our parliament. We are aware that this initiative is unique. It is the first time in modern history that two countries previously in conflict have decided to deal with issues of violence through a joint Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We believe that, if this process is successful, particularly since it involves a predominantly Catholic country — one of the smallest and poorest in the world — and the largest Muslim country — a vibrant functioning democracy — it could indeed set a positive precedent for the rest of the world. It would show that, at this time of debates and so-called dialogue among civilizations, a predominantly Muslim country and a predominantly Catholic country, both from the developing world, have the courage and vision to address their shared past and bring to an end the most unhappy chapter of their past in a manner satisfactory to our peoples, first and foremost, but also meeting the expectations of the international community.

In conclusion, on behalf of my President, my Prime Minister and my people, I appeal to the Security Council to consider positively our request for one final year's extension of the United Nations mission in Timor-Leste.

I know that, for those who have served on the Security Council over the last five years, my personal credibility is not very high, because this is not the first time I have appeared here to request another six-month or one-year extension. But members are familiar with the Latin proverb, "*errare humanum est*". I have erred in the past, being on the optimistic side, thinking that by 2004 we would no longer need a peacekeeping mechanism in Timor-Leste. We are requesting one more one-year or six-month extension of the peacekeeping mechanism.

It is a very small, critical mission. We know that the Security Council faces extraordinary burdens elsewhere. But since 1999 the United Nations has made a tremendous contribution, under the Secretary-General's leadership and under the Security Council's leadership, to what today is one of the most successful United Nations stories in the world.

We do not want to, as it were, blackmail the Council with dire, dark scenarios, but the reality is that, as much as we are all — the East Timorese leadership and people, and the international community — rightly proud of the achievements, peace in East Timor and the institutions that have made that peace a reality are all

very fragile. We do not believe that a request for a six-month to one-year mission extension, to consolidate the peace that we have achieved, is asking too much.

I thank the Council; may God the almighty and merciful inspire it in its deliberations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ramos-Horta for the kind words addressed to me and to my country, Benin.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): Allow me first to register my Government's condolences to the Government and the people of Bangladesh over the tragic killings of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. President, my delegation appreciates your convening of this public meeting concerning the situation in Timor-Leste at this important juncture in order to consider our future steps as the end of the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) approaches in a few months' time.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Mr. Hasegawa, for his comprehensive briefing. We welcome the presence at this meeting of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, and we thank him for the statement he just made.

At the outset, we wish to note with satisfaction the tangible achievements and progress made in the overall situation in Timor-Leste, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/99), especially in the improved security situation, with respect to State institutions and capacities, and in terms of promoting democracy and human rights, during UNMISET's final consolidation phase over the past year. We are pleased with the steady, positive developments being made in the country, since Japan, as a friend in Asia, has quite substantially participated in assisting Timor-Leste in the process of keeping the peace and consolidating the gains of peace, through UNMISET and other multilateral and bilateral frameworks. We would like to commend Special Representative Hasegawa and his staff, and those working on the ground, for their valuable contributions, and we express our high expectations that they will push on with their efforts, as the mission's mandate approaches its end in May, to make those achievements as solid and sustainable as possible.

The significant improvement in bilateral relations between Indonesia and Timor-Leste in recent months, as demonstrated by the initiatives taken at the highest level of Government, by President Gusmão and President Yudhoyono, is to be welcomed. We pay a high tribute to that encouraging development in their bilateral relationship, and we hope that this process will continue, because it is critically important for the future of Timor-Leste.

On the other hand, problems remain that will require serious attention from both countries. My delegation is concerned, for example, at the prospect, pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/99), that the delineation of the land border is unlikely to be finished by May due to the postponement of bilateral meetings. Incidents continue, including the recent incursion of an armed ex-militia group and the ensuing gunfire, despite the reported overall calm and stability in the country. We urge both sides to take steps to ensure that the border demarcation talks are brought to a successful conclusion and that border security control is enhanced through better bilateral cooperation. These measures are critically important for security in Timor-Leste, and we hope that both countries will further strengthen their efforts for an early solution of the border issue, including by the front-loading of the Indonesia-Timor-Leste Technical Subcommittee on Border Demarcation and Regulation.

Another challenge is the existence of what have been referred to as gaps in the transition process in Timor-Leste, as it strives towards its post-conflict and sustainable peacebuilding phase, which the report of the Secretary-General has identified. We take note of those findings. Against the backdrop of the substantive progress made so far, and as the United Nations peacekeeping activities enter into a final stage, calling for the redoubling of efforts for the consolidation of peace, the fact that there are still important unmet requirements in some key areas is cause for concern. If left unresolved, this situation could threaten the important gains made and could even have a potential unravelling impact, which must be avoided. But Dili itself is not able to address those problems alone; nor is bilateral donor assistance likely to be forthcoming. The Secretary-General therefore suggests, on the basis that such gaps still exist, that a reconfigured and scaled-down United Nations mission be maintained for another year. We take note of that assessment.

The international community, Japan included, has invested heavily in Timor-Leste since 1999, in helping it to find peace, consolidate its gains and stand on its own feet, and we all would like to ensure that the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Timor-Leste remains the success story that it has been. We would not want to see a reversal in the final phases of peacebuilding. Japan is therefore prepared to consider sympathetically the proposal for retaining, on the expiry of UNMISET's current mandate, some form of United Nations activities in Timor-Leste to address these gaps.

In that connection, we note that, in some post-conflict situations in other regions of the world, the termination of a United Nations peacekeeping operation has been followed by the establishment of a peacebuilding type of mission. Likewise, in the case of Timor-Leste, we believe that a small United Nations mission dedicated to peacebuilding, with the minimum required number of personnel, and authorized for a limited duration, could be a useful and pragmatic solution to the remaining problems that the country faces in its last phases of transition.

I would like to add that Japan will provide continued and strong support in Timor-Leste's nation-building effort through our bilateral aid as well, with the emphasis on sectors such as capacity and human resources development, infrastructure, agriculture and the consolidation of peace. And we will be participating actively in the development partners meeting scheduled to be held in April.

We must also address issues concerning serious crimes committed in the past in Timor-Leste, as they have close bearing on the country's future stability and development. We note that the Secretary-General has decided to establish a commission of experts in order to face squarely the issue of impunity. For the commission to function effectively, it will need to have good cooperation from the countries concerned. We strongly hope that the commission will maintain a constructive relationship with the Truth and Friendship Commission which the Governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia have agreed to establish.

In conclusion, my Government expresses its conviction that, with continued support from the international community, particularly the United Nations, the foundations for stability and progress in Timor-Leste will be strengthened, and the people of Timor-Leste will forge ahead under their wise political leadership — particularly that of President Gusmão, Prime Minister Alkatiri and Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta — in their determination to effect nation-building that is underpinned by ownership and accountability. We must ensure that UNMISET and its successor United Nations presence see to it that the transition process continues on a smooth path, and we must spare no effort in ensuring that we leave a successful chapter in the history of United Nations peacekeeping operations in that country.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I should like to associate myself with the words of condolence addressed to the Government and the people of Bangladesh following the death of peacekeepers from that country in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This tragic incident once again confirms the importance of ensuring proper security for United Nations peacekeepers as they serve and do their very important job for the entire international community.

We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hasegawa, for having introduced the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and for the very useful additional information he gave about developments in that country.

In recent months, Timor-Leste has made further progress towards self-sufficiency. We take note of the successful start-up of the process of elections to local Government bodies, the further establishment of legislative structures and the ongoing consolidation of public institutions. We deem it important that the domestic political situation in the country as a whole has remained stable.

However, we agree with the Secretary-General's conclusion that the progress achieved by the Timorese is insufficient, as Timor-Leste has not yet met the criteria for an independent State, despite the fact that the Government and the people, with the support of the United Nations, are making very intensive efforts in that area. That applies first and foremost to public administration, the police and border control.

After 20 May of this year, when UNMISET's mandate expires, the country will still require multifaceted international assistance in order to ensure security, stability and development. That is precisely

why Russia supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General — agreed to by the Government of Timor-Leste — to extend UNMISET's activities, in a scaled-down configuration, for a period of up to one year. During that period, an ongoing United Nations presence should be maintained in the country.

We welcome the improvement in Timorese-Indonesian relations, and we hope that the bilateral Truth and Friendship Commission that will soon be starting work there will help to strengthen cooperation between the two States and facilitate a speedy solution to the remaining unresolved questions, including the investigations into the serious human rights violations committed in East Timor in 1999.

The full settlement of the question of State borders is of great importance for ensuring security and sustainable development in Timor-Leste. We look forward to prompt solutions in this area that are agreeable to all parties concerned.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm the support of the Russian Federation for the work being done by Mr. Hasegawa and by the entire staff of the Mission he heads as they discharge the extremely important mandate of that Mission.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I should like to join colleagues in expressing the condolences of the British Government to the Government of Bangladesh. We should never forget that, day in and day out, it is the peacekeepers, it is United Nations personnel who are actually on the front line of our efforts to establish better international peace and security.

Like other colleagues, I am grateful to the Secretary-General's Special Representative for his briefing and, indeed, to his Mission for the work they carry out. It is also a pleasure to welcome back to the Council the Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste.

The representative of Luxembourg will shortly make a statement on behalf of the European Union. I should like to align the United Kingdom with that position.

As the Secretary-General's report makes clear, the Government and the people of Timor-Leste, with the assistance of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), continue to make progress on the road towards self-reliance and self-sufficiency. But we agree with the assessment of the Secretary-General that significant challenges remain — we have heard those set out this morning — and that the provision of international assistance will therefore continue to be crucial. It is incumbent on us all to provide such assistance — be it from the United Nations, be it regional, be it bilateral.

The United Kingdom very much supports a continued United Nations presence in Timor-Leste beyond the end of UNMISET's mandate this May. What we would like to see is a successor which is small, which is tightly focused, and which is essentially a political mission concentrating on institutional capacity-building and with a clear and achievable exit strategy. I think that is the right way to go to take us in transition from the present arrangements towards a situation which East Timor very much hopes for, which is that they be able to do this entirely themselves. Until we get there, we need a Mission.

We welcome the continuing evolution of the relationship between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, including through the establishment, to which the Foreign Minister referred earlier, of the bilateral Truth and Friendship Commission. We welcome the substantial progress which is being made on the question of border demarcation, and we encourage both Governments, if indeed only 4 per cent is now outstanding, to resolve the outstanding 4 per cent as soon as possible.

Finally, I should like to reiterate our support for the commission of experts established by the Secretary-General to assess the progress made — especially how to tackle the issue of justice — and we look forward to a recommendation covering human rights and enduring, sustainable justice for Timor-Leste.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to express our solidarity and our condolences to the people and the Government of Bangladesh and to the families of the soldiers who died recently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I wish also to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, for his presentation of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). We welcome also the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta. My

delegation is particularly pleased to see Mr. Ramos-Horta seated at the Council table, as this reflects the success of the whole process that led to the independence of Timor-Leste, which began when my country was a member of the Security Council during the period 1999-2000.

Argentina wishes to reaffirm its readiness to continue to provide assistance to Timor-Leste as it consolidates its institutions and seeks to preserve the gains it has made in the past five years, at the cost of so many sacrifices.

In the period that has elapsed since the people of Timor-Leste so courageously voted in favour of independence, the country's Government, with the assistance of the international community, has made outstanding progress in consolidating its national institutions and public administration. In that context, we congratulate the people and the authorities of Timor-Leste on everything they have done to overcome the difficult conditions that prevailed at the time of independence, thus advancing towards peace, prosperity and democracy. We also wish to express our gratitude to the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) for its work, and to all the other organs of the United Nations system that have made a significant contribution to those achievements.

As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/99) and the instructive briefing by Mr. Hasegawa make clear, a number of tasks remain to be completed. Timor-Leste continues to need assistance from the international community in key areas such as border control and management; establishment of a professional police service; development of key State institutions; and respect for democratic governance and human rights. Progress has been made in each of those areas. However, as the Secretary-General notes in his report, Timor-Leste has not yet reached the critical threshold of self-sufficiency.

We also welcome the significant progress made in the area of relations between Timor-Leste and its neighbours Indonesia and Australia. In the case of Indonesia, we should emphasize the good state of bilateral relations, as attested to by frequent high-level meetings between President Gusmão and Prime Minister Alkatiri of Timor-Leste on the one hand and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on the other. However, outstanding issues, such as the demarcation of the land border, remain. With regard to the border issues, we appeal to Timor-Leste and its neighbours to continue to work on the demarcation of the land and maritime borders and on determining how the natural resources of the continental shelf should be distributed. We believe it is essential to resolve those outstanding issues in order to enable Timor-Leste to approach the future with a stronger economic position.

We would also like to welcome the creation, just noted by the Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste, of a bilateral Truth and Friendship Commission.

As noted earlier, although there has been commendable work done by the United Nations in recent years, there is still much that remains to be done. We feel that premature withdrawal by the United Nations from Timor-Leste could have negative consequences for the future of the country, possibly jeopardizing everything that has so far been achieved, with such great effort. On other occasions, my delegation has noted the need for the Security Council to take a long-term approach, with proper assessment of the possible consequences of a hasty decision for the well-being of countries that have been working hard to build their institutions.

With that in mind, we ought to draw a lesson from the events of the 1990s in a country of my country's region — Haiti — which we hope will not be repeated in this instance. We must not forget that Timor-Leste gained its independence only in May 2002 and that much that remains to be done. The country continues to have the lowest levels of human development in Asia, and constant work is needed in the areas of health, education and other aspects of human development. In that regard, it will be essential to be able to continue to rely on international assistance in support of the Government's efforts to achieve those goals.

The view that there is a need for a continued substantive United Nations presence after UNMISET's mandate expires on 20 May 2005 is shared by the Secretary-General. His report offers details of the scale, mandate and features that the mission would have. My delegation supports those recommendations and is prepared to work constructively to achieve consensus within the Security Council with a view to establishing a United Nations mission along the lines suggested by the Secretary-General and by the Timor-Leste authorities.

In the short time that has elapsed since 1999, the people of Timor-Leste have shown the international community their devotion to peace and democracy and their courageous determination to build a prosperous nation. Argentina considers that the international community should continue to lend its support to Timorese institution-building. Withdrawing the participation of the United Nations from that process too soon could imperil the achievements and the significant investment that the international community has made in Timor-Leste.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): Like other colleagues, I would like to convey our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Bangladesh on the tragic death of nine peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would like to thank Special Representative Sukehiro Hasegawa for his comprehensive briefing and to commend him for his excellent work. I also welcome the Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste to the Security Council.

Denmark associates itself with the statement that the representative of Luxembourg will make on behalf of the European Union.

It is very promising that the positive developments and progress in Timor-Leste have continued during the past three months. The democratic process has been further consolidated by the holding of local elections and by the National Parliament's law-making process. We welcome the Government's efforts to fulfil its reporting obligations under international human rights instruments and, in that respect, we urge the Government to urgently select the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice.

The presence in Timor-Leste of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) has been an important stabilizing factor, and UNMISET has ensured significant progress in institution-building. But much still remains to be done in key areas such as capacity-building in the public sector and the consolidation of a legal framework. The task for UNMISET now is to complete a smooth transition from a peacekeeping to a peacebuilding operation that can ensure a sustainable development assistance framework.

It is clear, as described by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2005/99), that Timor-Leste will need the support of the United Nations system also after the termination of UNMISET's mandate. My Government supports a continued United Nations presence in Timor-Leste in order to successfully complete the work the Council initiated in 1999. In that respect, we note the Secretary-General's recommendations for a restructured mission and look forward to further discussion in the Council of those recommendations.

In considering future United Nations assistance to Timor-Leste, including on capacity-building in the public sector, my Government will support an approach based on national ownership that places Timor-Leste in the driver's seat. The number of international United Nations advisers must be reduced over the coming months to give room for the Timorese to assert their leadership.

My Government has noted with great satisfaction the improved relationship between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. It is our hope that the improved relationship will soon be translated into concrete progress on the delineation of the two countries' common land border. We urge the two parties to spare no effort to resolve the pending issues.

Denmark fully shares the view of the Secretary-General that the issue of serious crimes committed in Timor-Leste in 1999 is a concern not only for the two countries, but also for the international community at large. The fight against impunity is of outmost importance, and the perpetrators of those crimes must be brought to justice.

My Government therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's decision, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1573 (2004), to establish a commission of experts to conduct a thorough assessment of the progress made in the legal proceedings at the two national human rights tribunals in Jakarta and Dili respectively. We strongly urge the two parties to fully cooperate with the expert commission.

Denmark also welcomes the formation of a bilateral Truth and Friendship Commission by Indonesia and Timor-Leste and hopes that the Commission will further contribute to progress in the fight against impunity.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): Allow me first to express our deep condolences to the Government of

Bangladesh for the loss of eight of its peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, for introducing the Secretary-General's report and updating the Council on the situation in Timor-Leste.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

I would also like to welcome among us the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste. It is always a pleasure to have him here.

Since independence in 2002, there is no doubt that remarkable progress has been made in Timor-Leste, primarily due to the determination and the efforts of its citizens and the Timorese Government. The role of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor has been a central one in the preservation of peace and stability in the country. We are grateful for the hard work of all its personnel, as well as of all the development and humanitarian agencies and financial institutions of the United Nations system involved in the economic reconstruction, social advancement and general peacebuilding efforts in the country.

The Secretary-General, in his report, records the current positive developments in the overall internal situation in Timor-Leste, as well as the continued positive trends in the country's relations with Indonesia. We warmly welcome all steps towards peace and reconciliation between the two neighbours. In that context, the establishment of the Truth and Friendship Commission is of particular importance. Dealing with the difficult problems of the past, especially human rights violations, and ending the perpetrators' impunity are necessary measures in order to create a solid base of confidence and stable conditions for further improvement in their relations. The Secretary-General's decision to establish a commission of experts to assist the parties in their quest for justice and reconciliation is highly commendable in that regard.

The bitter past is behind them. The Timorese people can now focus on building their country and improving the conditions of everyday life, especially in the health, nutrition and education sectors. As in all similar cases, there is a lot still to be done. Establishing sustainable State institutions, including in the judicial and financial sectors, border management and control, law enforcement, respect of human rights, and the promotion of democratic governance and rule of law.

Timor-Leste and its people have traveled a long way in the past five years and the presence and assistance of the international community have been of crucial importance in the successful outcome of their efforts. The journey is not over yet. Dealing with the remaining challenges requires additional help on the part of the international community. The Timorese ask for that help and the Secretary-General thinks that it is necessary.

In this case, Greece believes that the request for help cannot and should not go unanswered. The international community has invested a lot of money and effort in making Timor-Leste a success story. We should not allow it to falter at the last stages.

There are various ideas about how to continue providing assistance. We need to explore all available options and come up with the one most suitable, under the circumstances, so that the people of Timor-Leste can enjoy every chance to consolidate their achievements and successfully pursue their quest for peace, stability and development towards they future they dream of and deserve. The Secretary-General has submitted some proposals. Greece would have no difficulties supporting them.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): We thank you, Sir, for convening this public meeting on Timor-Leste. We also join the members of the Council in extending condolences to the Government and people of Bangladesh over the tragic deaths of their peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

I also wish to thank Mr. Hasegawa, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing on political, diplomatic and economic developments in Timor-Leste. Indeed, considerable rewards have been and are still being reaped from the significant investment in Timor-Leste by the international community, judging from the political progress that has been achieved and the relative calm and stability now prevailing there. We also acknowledge the efforts being exerted by the Timorese throughout the process and their determination to increase their involvement and

ownership in the strengthening of their political, legal and security institutions.

We also welcome the continuing improvement in the relations of Timor-Leste with its neighbours, particularly Indonesia, recently culminating in an agreement to form a Truth and Friendship Commission that would address the human rights abuses perpetrated in 1999.

My delegation takes note of the findings of the eight transition working groups, contained in the Secretary-General's report, and the conclusions and recommendations stemming from those findings.

The international community should heed the wise caution of the Secretary-General against jeopardizing the achievements that have been made through the political and resource investments of the international community in Timor-Leste. The Secretary-General's recommendation for a reconfigured and scaled-down Mission will be supported by my delegation during the forthcoming negotiations for a new mission in Timor-Leste. During this transition period, the country will require a substantial number of international personnel both to fill the gaps in the administration and to address continuing capacity-building. As the Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste said, that would be better ensured by systematic and guaranteed United Nations assistance than by bilateral development assistance.

The present stage of Timor-Leste's development dictates that the heavy investment poured into establishing peace and keeping it can be preserved only by a sustainable socio-economic development framework for Timor-Leste. A peaceful, free and strong country will require economic self-sufficiency. In the medium to long terms, that is the new phase of investment that the international community should focus on in assisting Timor-Leste. We welcome the information given by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General about the petroleum fund, and in that regard I would like to ask him for information on any developments on the matter of the maritime boundary of Timor-Leste with Australia. That has been discussed in the past and is of interest to the international community, as it would have a significant effect on the future economic self-sufficiency of Timor-Leste and its capacity to address the many political and socio-economic challenges it faces.

Finally, my delegation notes the creation of the United Nations commission of experts tasked to review the progress made on human rights and serious crimes. That is one of the most sensitive issues and we hope the commission will be able to come up with positive recommendations on the matter. External intervention always needs the cooperation of parties, including the existing institutions and processes concerned, to be fully effective. The history of the United Nations intervention in Timor-Leste reflects a partnership with the Timorese and cooperation by Indonesia. Ultimately, the commission's success will be determined by the common goals underpinning it and the engagement and support of the parties concerned.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I should like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, and to thank him for his important statement. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hasegawa, for his clear and detailed introduction of the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

My delegation welcomes the significant progress that has been made in Timor-Leste during UNMISET's consolidation phase. That progress is reflected in the establishment of stable institutions, the holding of the first local elections, the adoption by Parliament of a number of legislative measures, and the implementation of steps to resolve the problem of former combatants.

Timor-Leste has continued to make progress in establishing its institutions and the rule of law, thanks to the commitment and resolve of its leaders and the people of Timor-Leste. With the assistance of UNMISET and bilateral and multilateral aid, the capacities of the public administration and judicial systems and of the security bodies have expanded and become stronger. We are pleased that relations between Timor-Leste and its neighbours have improved steadily. In that regard, we particularly welcome the good relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. We call upon them to expand their bilateral cooperation in order to resolve outstanding issues, including the important problem of border demarcation. We also hope that an agreement will soon be concluded between Australia and Timor-Leste with regard to the exploitation of mineral resources in the Timor Sea.

We note from the report of the Secretary-General that many tasks in important sectors are yet to be completed. In that regard, we believe that international assistance remains critical to the long-term security and stability of the country, as well as to its sustainable development, especially in the areas identified by the transition working groups — including in border management and control, the training of a professional police force, the development of State institutions and respect for democratic governance and human rights.

Given the conclusions made by the Secretary-General after a review of all the recent developments, Timor-Leste has not yet reached the critical threshold of self-sufficiency. International assistance therefore remains vital. My delegation supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General to maintain UNMISET, with reduced personnel, for an additional period so that it may complete its tasks and build upon the progress already achieved.

It is incumbent upon the international community to continue to lend its assistance to the development of Timor-Leste and to participate in its economic reconstruction. We are convinced that, thanks to the efforts of the Government and people of Timor-Leste, along with the support of the United Nations and the international community, Timor-Leste will continue to make progress in nation-building.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): We extend our condolences to the Government of Bangladesh and the families of the peacekeepers who were killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last week. That tragic development should receive due attention from the Council.

We welcome the presence in the Council this morning of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. I should also thank Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Timor-Leste, for presenting the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in Timor-Leste (UNMISET).

The overarching message of the report is the prevailing calm and stability in Timor-Leste. The reported security incidents appear routine and characteristic of the formative stages of nationhood for a country emerging from violent conflict.

Timor-Leste is making steady and sure progress towards democracy, as demonstrated by the successful and popularly backed local elections in the districts of Bobonaro and Oecussi. Those elections will serve as an example for the coming elections in other districts that are scheduled for later this year. The National Parliament has embarked upon a serious agenda of enacting vital pieces of legislation that define, and lay the foundation for, systems of political accountability, the rule of law, justice, respect for human rights and a modern public administration.

The report of the Secretary-General provides useful benchmarks for assessing the performance of the mandate of UNMISET as it implements resolution 1573 (2004). In the short period since independence, the Government and people of Timor-Leste have scored all-round positive achievements, in partnership with the United Nations Mission of Support and other multilateral and bilateral partners. Nonetheless, as the UNMISET mandate expires, on 20 May 2005, there remains business in critical areas that must be finished to permit a seamless take-off to institutionalized self-sufficiency in Timor-Leste.

The key areas identified by the working groups as yet to be consolidated deserve particular attention from the Council. The top leadership of Timor-Leste has confirmed its need for support. It has also requested the support of several heads of State and Government, including members of the Council, to continue the presence of UNMISET for one more year, to 20 May 2006. The Secretary-General's recommendation for a scaled-down structure in response to needs, and for the sake of continuity, is a reasonable, appropriate investment in the stability of Timor-Leste. The maintenance of law and order and justice is the cornerstone of a convulsing fractured society determined to live in peace with itself and its neighbour, Indonesia.

The judiciary and the police are vital State organs whose future must be firmly anchored in sustainable professional expertise and operational capacities. Developing specialized competencies and skills, such as through training of competent judges and forensic experts, will obviously take longer than the requested extended duration of UNMISET. It will also require longer-term advisers.

We note with interest the measures taken at the highest level by both Timor-Leste and Indonesia to

fight impunity in relation to the serious crimes committed in 1999, in accordance with resolution 1573 (2004). The establishment of the Truth and Friendship Commission is a positive development in that direction. We hope that the judicial processes in both Dili and Jakarta, established in connection with the serious crimes committed in 1999, will work closely with the Secretary-General's newly established commission of experts.

The security and management of the Tactical Coordination Line at the border requires a political and legal framework, of which the authorities in the two countries are very much aware. They should be encouraged in those constructive initiatives. On the ground, progress in training the Border Police Unit is satisfactory, but it requires more expertise. The enhancement of the work of the Timorese defence forces, including the required liaison services, should continue beyond 2005, as specified in the Secretary-General's report.

Timor-Leste will continue to require multilateral and bilateral international assistance in other areas of public administration and in the development role in general. The pledges that have been made in those areas need to be implemented. The adjustment of the residual UNMISET presence for another 12 months after May this year will then be made accordingly as part of the exit strategy.

In conclusion, we should acknowledge, and take pride in, the fact that the successes recorded by Timor-Leste thus far are synonymous with the successes of the United Nations and the international community as whole. The opposite would be true if Timor-Leste were to slide back for lack of assistance at this critical juncture.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): My delegation extends its deepest sympathy to the victims and families of the peacekeepers deceased in the tragic events that took place last Friday in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also extend the same sentiments to the Government of Bangladesh.

I would like to thank Mr. Hasegawa for his briefing on the situation in Timor-Leste and on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). I would like to thank him in particular for his presentation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding UNMISET's mandate. I also express my gratitude to Foreign Minister José Ramos-Horta for having shared his Government's views regarding the challenges ahead and the need for a continued United Nations presence in Timor-Leste. Before I express my delegation's preliminary views on those recommendations — and taking into account the concerns expressed by Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta — I deem it useful to make a brief assessment of the current situation.

First, it must be underlined that, during the past six years, the people and the authorities of Timor-Leste have been able to achieve quite promising progress concerning the consolidation of the Timorese State and its institutions. That improvement is even more evident when compared with the achievements in similar situations during the same period of time. The progress achieved is the best guarantee for peace and stability in the region. My delegation believes that the strong and unequivocal commitment of the international community to the advancement of the cause of Timorese independence constitutes an important component of the success story of Timor-Leste.

As recognized in the Secretary-General's report, most State institutions and other relevant structures in Timor-Leste were put in place thanks to an integrated and comprehensive strategy, conceived under the auspices of the United Nations and closely followed by the Security Council, that has benefited from the active support of the international community.

Secondly, it must be pointed out that despite that undisputable progress, the integrated and comprehensive strategy conceived by the Security Council for Timor-Leste has not yet borne all its fruit. Timor-Leste still faces considerable shortfalls and limitations in terms of the capacity of its Government and people to fully exercise their sovereignty and independence in a sustainable manner. Timor-Leste's vulnerability is evident in its dependence on expatriate advisers, foreign economic aid and external assistance to provide for almost all types of public goods and services, from public planning and administration to emergency security in case of imminent risk or threat.

In view of that, it is unlikely that Timor-Leste will be in a position in May 2005 to assume by itself the burden of consolidating State institutions and promoting its recently achieved democratic status without outside help. Consequently, the Council should reaffirm its commitment to peace and stability in that country, as was done in 1999. It should reaffirm its

commitment to the same long-term, integrated and comprehensive strategy aimed at consolidating Timorese independence. The withdrawal of the United Nations from Timor-Leste at this time would lead to setbacks that would put at risk the achievements accomplished so far. We cannot afford to let that happen.

Our assessment recommends that appropriate adjustments be made to the Security Council's previous strategy, taking into account the progress achieved and the existing vulnerabilities. My delegation looks forward to engaging in talks with all Council delegations as well as the Secretariat, Mr. Hasegawa, members of the core group on Timor-Leste and other interested parties, such as the international financial institutions and agencies of the United Nations system, in order to facilitate the development of a new strategy.

We are open and flexible, but firm, when it comes to the need to be constructive, objective, responsible and far-sighted. Peace and development are interconnected and require the renewed commitment of the international community. My delegation suggests that we should commence by trying to build a consensus on the evaluation of the current situation in Timor-Leste. We should also try to reach common ground regarding the level and nature of the threats now facing the country. We count on the very good work being done by the transitional working groups, devoted mainly to the various aspects related to civil administration and public institutions. Only when we have achieved that will we be in a position to move to a substantive discussion on ways and means to address Timor-Leste's problems and to elaborate a new strategy to guide the international and United Nations presences in the country. We should broaden our perspective so as to encompass in our strategy the concern related to post-conflict situations highlighted by the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

My delegation strongly believes that next May, when the Council decides on the future of UNMISET, most of the Secretary-General's recommendations should be adopted, including the reference to civilian advisers in key positions, the continuation of training in some of the national security agencies and maintenance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his Office. In our opinion, they are essential in order to marshal international efforts in the best interests of Timor-Leste.

Finally, I wish to emphasize that the continued United Nations presence in Timor-Leste after May 2005 should maintain its most important characteristic: its multilateral, comprehensive and goal-oriented nature. As part of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, Brazil is fully committed to the future of Timor-Leste. We are proud to announce that a number of recent bilateral initiatives have been launched to enhance cooperation — particularly in the field of capacity-building and training — in the area of justice and in the military sector, and that many more ongoing bilateral efforts are being pursued.

Mr. Fendrick (United States of America): The United States would also like to associate itself with the condolences offered to Bangladesh for the loss of its peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last week.

We welcome the Secretary-General's latest report on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and Special Representative Hasegawa's presentation to the Council. We would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, for his presence today.

UNMISET has helped Timor-Leste make substantial progress since its independence almost three years ago. We fully appreciate the challenges that Timor-Leste will continue to face as a new State. Timor-Leste will continue to need concrete support from its friends, including the United Nations, for some time to come. Any additional United Nations assistance should focus on a few key areas: developing the capacity of judicial and economic institutions; continued police training, including human rights sensitivity training; and promoting further political development by fostering the growth of a diverse political party system.

Several recent developments shed light on the need for further institutional and political development. The United States was particularly concerned about the dismissal in January of 22 local judges in Timor-Leste, the resulting short-term loss of judicial capacity and the long-term implications for the development of a working judiciary. In addition, the reports of continued disregard for international human rights standards by Timorese police warrant the Council's attention. Furthermore, the postponement by the Government of Timor-Leste of bilateral negotiations with Indonesia on

their common border until June 2005 creates concern about the perceived urgency of border delineation. Finally, we remain committed to achieving credible accountability for the crimes committed against humanity in 1999, and we welcome the Secretary-General's establishment of a commission of experts to review the current judicial processes and to recommend next steps.

As one of Timor-Leste's largest bilateral donors, we have focused our assistance on rehabilitating the local economy, promoting a free and open economy, land reform, strengthening democracy, improving the judicial sector and training the police and military forces. We will continue to explore ways in which we can help Timor-Leste bilaterally to fill its needs in the key areas identified by its Government — border control, police advisers and civilian advisers — and we are encouraging other concerned Governments to do the same. The United States and other friends of Timor-Leste have police adviser and training programmes that will fill some of the gap as United Nations civilian police leave, and we plan to continue our police training programme in Timor-Leste after UNMISET concludes its work in May 2005.

It is clear to us that the peacekeeping phase of Timor-Leste's path to full self-sufficiency can now be successfully concluded. This transition from peacekeeping to a sustainable development framework represents an extremely significant and positive milestone in Timor-Leste's history. There is no longer a threat to international peace and security requiring a peacekeeping mission, and the relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia are improving. We believe that UNMISET should conclude as scheduled in May this year and that the United Nations and regional and international partners should look at alternative ways in which to fill critical institutional gaps. We would be open to considering for a discrete, limited period a non-peacekeeping United Nations mission such as a special political mission focused on Timor-Leste's most critical needs and structured to transfer skills as rapidly as possible.

It is important that the Government of Timor-Leste take increasing responsibility for the nation's future. Part of the process will be determining precisely what international assistance is needed in each of the areas identified by the Government and by the Secretary-General. Regarding police advisers, civilian advisers and military liaison officers, more modest United Nations support in each of those areas may be sufficient and in keeping with our goal of turning over more responsibility to the Timor-Leste Government.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, please allow me to express my condolences to the Government and the people of Bangladesh with regard to the peacekeepers who were killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My condolences go also to the families of the victims.

The Chinese delegation welcomes the presence at today's public meeting of His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, and thanks the Secretary-General for his report (S/2005/99) on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). Our thanks go also to Mr. Hasegawa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for his briefing.

We are pleased to see that over the past several months, the overall situation of Timor-Leste has remained stable. Local elections have been successfully held in two districts and some important pieces of legislation are in the pipeline. All of this demonstrates that political and legal institutions are being built and strengthened, and that the country's capacity for governance is continually improving.

Moreover, Timor-Leste remains committed to the development of good relations and cooperation with its neighbours and is determined to properly settle the outstanding issues in the interest of the lasting stability of the region, as well as in its own long-term interests. Such political wisdom and strategic vision are commendable. On this occasion, we wish to congratulate the Government and the people of Timor-Leste on the encouraging progress achieved and to express our appreciation to UNMISET for the positive role it has played.

On the other hand, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, Timor-Leste still faces serious challenges on many fronts, especially in such areas as State administration, the development of a national police force, democratic governance and human rights safeguards. There is still a need for international assistance and support. The leaders of Timor-Leste have made the relevant requests to the members of the Council, and China fully understands those requests.

It was with United Nations support that Timor-Leste achieved its independence and embarked on the path of peaceful nation-building five years ago with the generous support of the United Nations and the international community as a whole. The people and the Government of Timor-Leste has exerted strenuous effort to achieve the results that we witness today, which are described by all as a United Nations success story in Timor-Leste.

However, as the youngest and least developed nation in Asia, Timor-Leste is like a toddler who may still falter after taking an encouraging first step. We should not only help it to stand firmly on its own legs, but should also accompany it for some time in the journey ahead. We all know that United Nations support for Timor-Leste will come to an end some day, but we sincerely hope that the Timor-Leste success story will last forever. Therefore, we call on the Security Council to learn from past experience and give serious consideration to the requests of Timor-Leste and to the proposal of the Secretary-General, and to promptly reach consensus before 20 May of this year regarding continued United Nations support for Timor-Leste so as to ensure the lasting development and stability of that country.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, wish to convey my country's condolences to Bangladesh.

The Permanent Representative of Luxembourg will shortly be making a statement on behalf of the presidency of the European Union. My delegation fully associates itself with that statement.

Allow me also to thank Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa for his briefing and for the work he is doing in the field, which we highly appreciate. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. José Ramos-Horta, whose presence does us honour. We listened very carefully to his statement.

Allow me to say that we agree with the Secretary-General's analysis on progress made over the past 12 months in establishing solid State institutions and in promoting democracy and human rights. Major progress still remains to be made in several areas: border control and delineation; the strengthening of public administration and State institutions; economic self-sufficiency; and respect for good governance and human rights. Thus, it is clear that international support remains necessary, and that is what the Timorese authorities are requesting.

Accordingly, we will be favourably considering the proposals of the Secretary-General on maintaining a United Nations presence in Timor-Leste. But in this phase of peacebuilding, the United Nations should not act alone. The Timorese authorities must keep up their commitment, without which peacebuilding cannot occur. Several bilateral and multilateral partners — I am thinking in particular of the international financial institutions — should increase their support in order to allow for a smooth transition towards full stability.

At a time when UNMISET is preparing to complete its drawdown, the enormous progress that it has made possible since it was established in May 2002, when Timor-Leste gained independence, must be recognized. Stabilization is not complete, but it is well under way. Much remains to be done, and a United Nations presence must be maintained for some time to come. The level of United Nations presence must take account of the work done by UNMISET, which most definitely was a success story.

Mr. Dumitru (Romania): Allow me first of all to convey my Government's condolences to the Government and the people of Bangladesh on the tragic deaths of nine peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would like now to welcome Foreign Minister José Ramos-Horta, and, through him, to congratulate the Timor-Leste authorities on the steady progress they have achieved in putting the country firmly on the path to becoming a stable and democratic nation.

I also join other members of the Council in thanking the Secretary-General for his latest report (S/2005/99) on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and the Special Representative, Sukehiro Hasegawa, for his briefing.

As Romania aligns itself with the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, I would like to confine myself here to only a few specific comments.

First, I want to say how encouraged we are by the remarkable progress achieved in Timor-Leste in a wide range of sectors, as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report.

I would like also to reiterate Romania's commendation of the continued improvement of cooperation between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. We hope that that strong political commitment will make possible further progress on the delineation of the land border between the two countries.

It is also in this context that Romania welcomes the agreement between Timor-Leste and Indonesia to establish the Truth and Friendship Commission as an important concrete step forward in the consolidation of bilateral relations, including in the field of fighting impunity. Meanwhile, we consider the Secretary-General's recent decision to establish an independent commission of experts to conduct an assessment of the prosecution of serious crimes in Timor Leste a very welcome initiative, with the potential to make a difference to the overall efforts to put an end to impunity. Our assessment is that these two new structures — the commission of experts and the Truth and Friendship Commission — could and should coordinate their activities in the common effort to address the issue of serious crimes committed in 1999.

Turning to the role of UNMISET, we consider that its contribution to upholding governmental capacity-building efforts is outstanding. We congratulate the Mission, under the inspiring leadership of Special Representative Hasegawa, on the effective discharge of its mandate, including matters relating to the gradual transfer of ownership of the process to the Timorese, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1573 (2004).

We have taken due note of the Secretary-General's assessment regarding the challenges that remain and that require additional international assistance beyond the expiration of UNMISET's mandate on 20 May 2005. Undoubtedly, building adequate capacity to manage border affairs, increasing the professionalism and accountability of the police service, consolidating key State institutions and further enhancing respect for the rule of law and human rights are all among the vital areas in which self-sufficiency cannot be reached without continued international assistance.

The Security Council, bilateral donors and the wider international community have so far made an enormous investment in Timor-Leste. The achievements made by that country are remarkable. Yet these gains must be consolidated and their irreversibility must be safeguarded. The Government and people of Timor-Leste have proved their strong commitment to peace and the development of their country. Their strong pledge must be matched by the firm and long-term commitment of the international community in order to secure the confirmation of Timor-Leste as a notable success of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Accordingly, Romania favours the ongoing support of the international community in Timor-Leste beyond the expiration of UNMISET's mandate. We consider that the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his most recent report will be a solid basis for further discussions in the Security Council on the identification of the best formula for continued United Nations assistance to Timor-Leste.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Benin.

Benin joins in the expression of condolences to Bangladesh and of sympathy to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the families of the soldiers who fell on the field of honour in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I too would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, for the introduction he gave us this morning to the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and for his personal account of developments in Timor-Leste.

My delegation is pleased at the ongoing progress being made by this young State in strengthening its institutions. We congratulate the Government and people of Timor-Leste on having kept up the momentum of the transition since the country acceded to national sovereignty. We encourage them to stay the course and continue to work hard, fully mindful of the prospect of the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission.

In this respect, the Secretary-General's report describes not merely progress made but also challenges for the short- and medium-terms in UNMISET's main areas of operation to make the process of building a democratic nation irreversible and to deal with the difficulties involved in the transition from a period of

providing emergency assistance to a period of promoting sustainable socio-economic development.

In particular, we welcome the success of the local elections and the continuing strengthening of the legislative bodies. However, the persistence of the latent confrontation between the police and the army, the lack of professionalism among law enforcement forces and human rights violations are of concern to us, as is the lack of progress in the area of border demarcation.

These issues show that there are still difficulties and risks endangering the transition process in Timor-Leste, and they are a challenge to the international community. The international community must continue to support the efforts being made by that country to resolve the many problems it faces in the particularly crucial areas of security and defence, the establishment and consolidation of political institutions, the civil service and the improvement and maintenance of good neighbourly relations with Indonesia and Australia.

With regard to the assessments made by the Secretary-General in his report, Benin supports the idea of keeping a United Nations presence in Timor-Leste after 20 May 2005 and will take an active part in discussions about the form and modalities for that presence. In our view, that presence should be defined through taking thorough account of the context and of the capacity of the Timorese to meet the challenges that have been identified, using their own resources.

We believe that the withdrawal of UNMISET, which was set by resolution 1543 (2004), should be gradual and should take place in a way so as to not compromise what has been achieved in the essential sectors covered by the Mission.

The continuation of training programmes for the civil service and the judiciary, as well as in connection with the prosecution of serious crimes, may be decisive in strengthening the bases of the rule of law in the country. Benin cannot endorse any mechanical interruption of training courses just because the Mission that initiated them has reached the end of its mandate.

The international community must also resolutely continue to fight impunity and make sure that all persons who committed serious crimes during the violence of 1999 answer for their actions. The question of bringing to justice the 304 indictees living outside of Timor-Leste is a real challenge. We welcome here the establishment in February by the Secretary-General of the independent United Nations commission responsible, inter alia, for assessing progress made by the tribunals in Jakarta and Dili in dealing with their caseloads.

Furthermore, the exit strategy for UNMISET must be based on follow-up on assistance that might be provided by the United Nations funds and programmes.

In conclusion, we appeal to the international community to remain committed to Timor-Leste, because, despite the great efforts that have been made, a lot still remains to be done. Timor-Leste still needs international assistance.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Australia, on whom I call.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Mr. President, let me also immediately associate ourselves with the expressions of condolences to the Government and people of Bangladesh and to the families of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers killed while serving with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thank you, Sir, for convening this open meeting. Let me also join others in welcoming my friend, the Foreign Minister of East Timor, Mr. Ramos-Horta, who is with us today. I also want to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Hasegawa, for updating the Council on developments and for the excellent work he has done since his appointment.

It is clear that Timor-Leste has come a long way since achieving independence. A great deal — indeed, far and away the majority — of the credit must go to the determination and hard work of the people and the leaders of Timor-Leste. It is very good to have such a distinguished representative of the leadership with us today.

At the same time, the Council itself, and the United Nations membership more broadly, should be proud of the United Nations role in assisting Timor-Leste. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/99) shows, the United Nations Mission of

Support in East Timor (UNMISET), over the past 12 months, has contributed to the further consolidation of the transition to a democratic and peaceful Timor-Leste.

Australia is also proud of what it has done to assist Timor-Leste in building a stable and sustainable society. We have been a major supporter of UNMISET's operations and continue to provide a significant programme of bilateral assistance. Together with the United Nations and with other neighbours of Timor-Leste, Australia has a big stake here in ensuring that Timor-Leste is equipped to meet the challenges that it faces. We particularly commend the efforts of the Governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia in developing productive relations and a cooperative approach to border management issues. The development of close relations with its neighbours will be crucial to Timor-Leste's long-term stability.

Although Timor Leste has made commendable progress, clearly it requires the continued support of its neighbours and of the international community. Thus Australia would like to see a continuation of United Nations involvement in Timor-Leste, beyond 20 May 2005, when UNMISET's mandate expires, to safeguard the considerable investment made by the international community.

However, in our view, the current external security environment in Timor-Leste does not warrant a continuation of peacekeepers on the border. Australia's preference is therefore for a continued United Nations presence to concentrate efforts on essential nation-building tasks, especially in capacity-building for Government institutions, development of police and security forces and the strengthening of the law and justice systems.

In any future United Nations mission in Timor-Leste, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General should continue to report to the Security Council, which would retain oversight of the situation in Timor-Leste. The mission should also continue to be funded from the regular United Nations budget. We note that there would be no military costs involved under our preferred approach. It will be more important to ensure that essential civilian positions are adequately funded.

UNMISET has clearly made a significant contribution to building a capable and vibrant democracy in Timor Leste. But the current challenges facing Timor Leste require a new approach. It is our view that a continued United Nations presence post-UNMISET should focus on the key areas of capacity-building and governance.

Australia has been a significant contributor to United Nations efforts in support of our close friend and neighbour. As in the past, Australia can be relied upon to maintain its contribution in proportionate terms to any future United Nations presence in East Timor, however, the Council should decide how to proceed.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Luxembourg. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro and the European Fair Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me first to associate myself with the condolences expressed here today concerning the death of Bangladeshi members of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Since the Security Council last dealt with the question of Timor-Leste, the overall political situation has remained calm and stable. We congratulate the Government of Timor-Leste on the tangible progress achieved in adopting key legislation, in establishing State institutions and in holding successful local elections in two districts, the first elections ever organized by the Timorese authorities. We also welcome the Government's efforts to meet its human rights treaty obligations under international law, and to further improve the relationship between the armed forces and the police through legislative measures which are currently being prepared.

Lastly, the European Union would like to welcome the steady improvement in the relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. We hope that the increased number of high-level meetings will lead, in

particular, to progress on the delineation of their common land border.

While we note that a Truth and Friendship Commission will shortly be established to deal with human rights violations perpetrated in 1999, we remain concerned at the lack of progress in the fight against impunity. Those responsible for serious crimes committed in Timor-Leste in 1999 must be held accountable for their actions, in conformity with Security Council resolution 1573 (2004). In that context, the European Union welcomes the establishment by the Secretary-General of a commission of experts to assess the progress made by the Indonesian and Timorese judicial authorities.

The European Union commends the invaluable contribution of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) in ensuring a smooth transition from peacekeeping to a sustainable development framework. I take this opportunity to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, for his excellent work.

While tangible progress has been achieved in many areas during UNMISET's consolidation phase, which started in May 2004, we nevertheless share the assessment of the Secretary-General that significant challenges remain, and that the provision of international assistance beyond the expiration of UNMISET's current mandate on 20 May 2005 will be crucial for the long-term security, stability and sustainable development of Timor-Leste. Factors such as the rapid population growth, combined with a stagnant economy, could endanger the long-term stability of the country. Continued assistance from the international donor community will therefore be essential to strengthen the Government's capacity to promote sustainable economic growth and employment within a dynamic private sector.

For those reasons, the European Union supports an adequate continued United Nations presence in Timor-Leste after the expiration of UNMISET's mandate.

The States members of the European Union and the European Commission have provided vital assistance to Timor-Leste, contributing half of the external assistance given to the country since 1999, in the amount of €638 million. The support provided by the Union covers all sectors, and includes budget support. The contributions of the European Union to the Trust Fund for East Timor have represented almost two thirds of the total financial envelope, while budget support from the Union has represented one third of the international community's total budget support. The European Commission has committed €180 million to support rehabilitation and development efforts in a wide range of sectors, through the Trust Fund for East Timor and international agencies and organizations, in particular the United Nations.

Moreover, as a new member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States, Timor-Leste, in the near future, will benefit from the European Development Fund, which supports members of the cooperation agreement between the European Union and the ACP — the Cotonou Agreement. In that context, financial aid in the amount of €18 million has been proposed for Timor-Leste for 2006-2007.

Let me conclude by reiterating the European Union's great appreciation of Timor-Leste's efforts to build a self-sustained nation based on the rule of law as well as on a democratic and corruption-free society. The European Union will remain a steady partner in that endeavour.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Singapore. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): My delegation, too, would like to join preceding speakers in conveying our condolences to the Government and the people of Bangladesh and to the families of the nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers killed last Friday in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive progress report on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) for the last three months. I would like also to thank Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Foreign Minister of East Timor, for the comprehensive statement he made a short while ago.

My delegation would like also to pay tribute to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sukehiro Hasegawa for his leadership and outstanding work. We are encouraged by the steady progress made in various aspects of Timor-Leste's development efforts.

The Secretary-General's report has confirmed that the decision taken in May 2004 to extend the mandate of UNMISET was the correct one. I would like to make a few observations with respect to the Secretary-General's report.

First, it is clear from the Secretary-General's report that Timor-Leste's judiciary and public administrative systems are still in the early stages of development and that much more needs to be done to strengthen the capacity of Timorese State institutions. The work of the international judges and of the United Nations civilian advisers remains crucial to the development of the justice system and the legal and financial institutions. Building up those key institutions will take time, and we would like to commend the judges and the United Nations civilian advisers for their hard work and dedication. The work of the justice sector, especially in the operations of the district courts, is an important and integral part of the ongoing efforts to rebuild and establish the rule of law in the country. The continued support of United Nations legal advisers will definitely help to facilitate that process.

Secondly, we are heartened to note the progress made in the development of the various law enforcement agencies and in the training of the Timorese police force. From the report, it is clear that UNMISET civilian police advisers, especially police trainers, are still critically needed to provide mentoring and guidance to those enforcement agencies in the area of developing standard operating procedures, ethics and human rights training, and anti-riot training. Until the initial capacity of the Timorese police and defence force is fully realized, the international civilian police advisers will be much needed to help bolster the capacity of the local police, in particular the border police unit, and to provide a good foundation for the long-term security of the country.

Thirdly, one of the key challenges facing the Timor-Leste Government is the issue of border management and control. United Nations liaison officers can play a critical role in the urgent and necessary task of building up the expertise and professionalism of the Timorese border units in managing border-related issues and, in doing so, contribute positively towards maintaining the overall order and stability.

We fully support the Secretary-General's assessment that, despite the extraordinary progress made in Timor-Leste, significant challenges remain and that the provision of international assistance beyond the current mandate is crucial for the long-term security, stability and sustained development of that young nation.

The report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change has correctly identified the importance of helping to build and strengthen important key institutions as part of the process of peacebuilding in post-conflict countries. That is one recommendation that has found broad in-principle support from the United Nations membership. It is also a recommendation which has a strong bearing on the current situation in Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste is in the early stages of peacebuilding. It will continue to require international assistance, especially in strengthening its public administration, its judicial institutions and its security forces. Let us, as responsible partners, continue to render the needed support to that young nation, so that it can see concrete and measurable progress in its efforts at nation-building.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report, a premature termination of the important tasks before us could jeopardize the achievements as well as the significant investment that the international community has made in Timor-Leste since 1999. We would therefore urge the Security Council to support the judicious recommendations of the transition working groups and of the Secretary-General that we maintain a United Nations mission with a scaled-down structure in Timor-Leste for an additional 12-month period, and that we conduct a further evaluation of Timor-Leste's self-sufficiency by May 2006.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Portugal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): First of all, let me express my Government's condolences to the Government of Bangladesh on the tragic death of nine peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his latest report on the situation in Timor-Leste and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hasegawa for his excellent presentation. I should like

to take this opportunity to praise the dedicated efforts of the civilian, military and police components of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and to congratulate them on their many achievements in Timor-Leste.

I would like also to welcome Foreign Minister José Ramos-Horta and to thank him for his valuable contribution to this debate.

Portugal fully subscribes to the statement made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. I will add only a few comments of our own.

First, we very much welcome the establishment of a commission of experts to conduct a thorough assessment of the progress made by the judicial processes involving the Ad Hoc Human Rights Tribunal in Jakarta, the Serious Crimes Unit and the Special Panels for serious crimes in Dili. We look forward to its recommendations.

We also note and highly commend the steady and significant developments that have been taking place in the relationship of Timor-Leste with its neighbours regarding such important issues as land and maritime borders. It is of great importance that Timor-Leste secure timely access to its natural resources, thus paving the way for its peaceful and economically sustainable development.

Timor-Leste is in a critical period of its peacebuilding process, and the report of the Secretary-General clearly outlines a number of areas that will require international assistance beyond the expiration of the mandate of UNMISET. Much work remains to be done in the area of police training, namely in the management of the border, which remains porous and therefore a source of illegal incursions and illegal trade. Security on the border is a key factor for the political and social stability of Timor-Leste.

We note with concern that land border demarcation is incomplete. This is particularly worrisome because a successor arrangement to the present military liaison arrangement is not yet in place.

The Secretary-General's report states that Timor-Leste has made significant advances towards self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain, and continuing international assistance beyond the expiration of UNMISET's current mandate is essential for the mid- and long-term security, stability and sustainable development of that country.

That is why Portugal agrees with the recommendations set out by the Secretary-General to ensure that, after May 2005, a new structure for the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste is configured in order to address the existing needs. This would include such components as military liaison officers, police trainers, civilian advisers, human rights officers and a small office to support the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

We have made many advances and have invested a great deal in Timor-Leste since 1999. We need to preserve and consolidate the good results already obtained. Therefore, we are convinced that in order for the United Nations presence to have the credibility it needs, it should have a clear mandate from the Council and should be led by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We should pursue, for a further period, a concerted effort to enable Timor-Leste to achieve three interrelated goals: security and stability; institution-building and State-building; and an adequate environment that can lead to sustainable development.

I would like to reiterate that Portugal — both individually and as a member of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries — will remain committed to supporting those goals and the efforts by the United Nations to that effect.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): I wish to start by conveying my delegation's sincere condolences to the people and the Government of Bangladesh on the tragic death of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As this is the last day of the Republic of Benin's presidency of the Security Council this month, let me congratulate you, Sir, on the very able stewardship that you have shown during this busy period for the Security Council.

I am also happy to warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, in our midst.

Before I continue, let me thank Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa for his comprehensive briefing on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). Given the current phase of the mission, my delegation is of the view that the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/99) is very significant for the Council to consider.

Three months have elapsed since the Council last discussed this agenda item. Throughout the period under consideration, UNMISET has contributed significantly to the efforts to guide Timor-Leste to reach the stage of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Nearly two years after UNMISET first started its work in Timor-Leste, we are glad to observe that the core administrative structures critical to the viability and political stability of Timor-Leste have been functioning well, as was originally envisioned by the Security Council. As the work of the mission begins to wind down, my delegation reiterates its consistent support for the mandate of the mission.

As a country that shares history with Timor-Leste, Indonesia regards the young nation as one of the priorities of its foreign policy. Furthermore, as we have always stated, both nations decided to embrace forward-looking and reconciliatory policies in the interest of their peoples and of their development. That decision has been manifested in strengthened bilateral relations and the intensive meetings of the highest political officials of both countries.

Rigorous efforts have been made in the past three years to promote reconciliation between the two countries. That reconciliation by the two Governments and peoples has reached a satisfactory level and has shown significant results. Operation Solidarity, launched by President Xanana Gusmão following the Tsunami which on 26 December 2004 hit the Indonesian provinces of Aceh and North Sumatra, and the strong solidarity shown by individual citizens from across Timor-Leste through their donations to the victims of that natural disaster in Indonesia also attest to the tangible progress made in reconciliation between the peoples and the Governments of the two countries. We are deeply touched by that expression of the solidarity and support of the people and the Government of Timor-Leste.

In addition, Indonesia has been helping reconciliation among East Timorese, for example, by facilitating visits by leaders of Timor-Leste for dialogue with their compatriots in West Timor and by facilitating family reunifications among East Timorese. However, in order to maintain and further promote bilateral relations, both countries have underscored the importance of resolving the existing residual issues, while at the same time deepening and expanding bilateral cooperation.

Indeed, President Yudhoyono and President Xanana Gusmão have met several times since Mr. Yudhoyono's inauguration as President of the Republic of Indonesia in October 2004. The 14 December 2004 meeting in Bali between leaders of the two countries constituted a historic moment in our bilateral relations. The leaders reiterated their desire and determination to further enhance a stable, friendly and mutually beneficial relationship between their two countries. They also noted with satisfaction the steady and positive growth of their relations in the past three years, as reflected, for example, by the significant progress made in addressing residual issues such as land-border delineation, refugees, traditional border-crossing access and regulated market arrangements. Beyond politics and security, shared optimism was noted concerning economic relations, which, during this period, have witnessed a steadily growing and mutually beneficial flow of trade and investment.

Now, let me turn to something that was referred to by Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta. With a view to addressing decisively the matters pertaining to the events of 1999, leaders of Indonesia and Timor-Leste made an important decision by agreeing upon the establishment of a Truth and Friendship Commission. In that regard, I should like to support the statement of Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta on this matter and I will limit myself to highlighting only certain important aspects about the Commission.

The Commission, as an alternative to the commission of experts will provide an additional unique avenue for both countries to jointly address reported human rights violations that took place in the period leading up to and immediately after the popular consultation in 1999; its focus will be on revealing the truth and promoting friendship. This agreement is unprecedented in history. By its terms, these two nations that were severely affected by a common experience have agreed jointly to embark on finding out the truth about the allegations of human rights violations that occurred. On the basis of those findings, intracommunal and intercommunal reconciliation

among the peoples of the two countries will be further promoted.

The agreement of the heads of the two Governments clearly reflects maturity and the spirit to seek an acceptable solution that will heal the wounds and unload the burden of the past in order to continue to foster bilateral relations and friendship among both peoples.

Different countries with their respective experiences have chosen different means to come to terms with their past. In some countries, their leaders and their peoples might seek truth and reconciliation rather than engage in a prosecutorial process. Indonesia and Timor-Leste have opted to seek truth and promote friendship as a new and unique mechanism. True justice can be served through truth and acknowledgement of responsibility, while a prosecutorial process might only achieve justice but not necessarily establish truth or promote reconciliation. Therefore, Indonesia and Timor-Leste are determined to pursue the conclusion of the process in addressing the issue through the framework of the Commission. The Commission will be open to the assistance of the international community based on joint requests from both countries.

We envision that the establishment of the Commission will be formally announced soon. That will enable both nations to embark on a path that will permit us to lay down the burdens of the past. In that endeavour, it is the hope of the Indonesian Government that the international community, and particularly the Security Council, will lend its support to that unique and unprecedented initiative.

On the question of the land boundary between the two nations, let me assure the Council that the Government of Indonesia is ready at any time to sign the provisional agreement on the land boundary. We were pleased to hear the indication of a possible signing by both countries of the provisional agreement soon. The draft of that agreement was discussed and agreed on by both countries at their bilateral meeting in June 2004. As the Council is aware, there has been remarkable progress in the land-boundary delineation process, on which both countries have agreed on the coordinates of the border points along almost 95 per cent of the border. Some of the lines connecting those points have been agreed on as the boundary lines, and some are being considered as the approximate boundary lines.

The remaining tasks for the joint technical team, therefore, are the densification of the border points and the delineation survey in order to upgrade the approximate boundary lines into agreed boundary lines. Indonesia and Timor-Leste also have to discuss the remaining three unsolved segments. Another important work that has to be accomplished is the demarcation of the boundary lines. The joint technical team will resume further surveys of the border in June 2005 to register further progress. While looking forward to making further progress in the land boundary demarcation, we are cautious about the target for the completion of the process within a certain time frame.

In that regard, Indonesia would like to stress that border management is a continuous cooperative endeavour that will not stop once the two sides have come to an agreement on the land boundaries. In addition, border management is also deemed necessary in order to better respond to the possible incidence of criminal acts along the border areas. The continued strengthening of cooperation between the Indonesian police and military and the border patrol units of Timor-Leste on the border has resulted in a notable improvement of security and stability, not only in areas around the border, but also in Timor-Leste in general. Indonesia is committed to enhancing security cooperation with Timor-Leste, particularly in the field of border management. In that regard, the Joint Border Committee, as a subsidiary of the annual meeting of the Indonesia-Timor-Leste Joint Ministerial Commission, remains an important mechanism in which the two sides can, in a direct manner, discuss and enhance coordination in addressing issues relating to border demarcation and border management.

While land border demarcation is important, member States might also be interested to learn of developments in the delimitation of Timor-Leste's maritime boundary, on which the report is rather silent.

Now that the termination of the mandate of UNMISET is in view, it is also time to take a hard look at the need for Timor-Leste to strengthen its national capacity-building. In that regard, Indonesia understands that Timor-Leste, as reflected in the letter of its Prime Minister, Mr. Mari Alkatiri, to Secretary-General Kofi Annan of 20 January 2005, is seeking

additional United Nations assistance for a further year, following the progress made so far by UNMISET.

My delegation is of the view that the overall achievement of UNMISET does not preclude the possibility that some continued assistance from the international community to Timor-Leste is still needed. Given the particular need for Timor-Leste to strengthen its capacity-building in various sectors of public administration, as well as to maintain public order, the additional United Nations assistance requested by Timor-Leste deserves positive consideration.

The President (*spoke in French*): I think the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Thailand. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): First of all, I would like to thank you, Sir, and the Security Council for allowing me to participate in today's open debate on Timor-Leste under your presidency.

I wish to acknowledge the presence of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Senior Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Like the Council members and other representatives who spoke before me, I wish to express our deep condolences to the Government of Bangladesh for the tragic loss of its peacekeeping officers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation wishes to thank Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for presenting the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

Thailand welcomes the continual progress that has been made in Timor-Leste and commends the contributions of UNMISET, the United Nations programmes and agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations and international donors, and the efforts made, with the strong determination of the Government of Timor-Leste, in the nation-building process of that country. Such a positive development would not have been possible without the crucial roles of all parties concerned, and especially that of the United Nations, which has been internationally acknowledged as a success story for the Organization in peacekeeping.

The journey in the advancement of Timor-Leste is still at the beginning stage. To be realistic, although many achievements have been made, the country's path to progress will continue to meet with a mixture of successes and challenges alike. In order to help Timor-Leste to grow and prosper alongside the community of nations, the international community must remain active and engaged in rendering assistance to Timor-Leste.

UNMISET has played a significant role in restoring peace and maintaining stability, as well as in developing democracy, development and administration processes in Timor-Leste. Nevertheless, as the report has pointed out, much remains to be done to make sure that the gains achieved up to now are protected and put to better use in the future. It is thus imperative that the accomplishments of UNMISET be maintained in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the long-term development of the country and its people.

Therefore, Thailand concurs with the recommendation of the Secretary-General that UNMISET should maintain its presence in the country, with a scaled-down composition and size. That can be seen as a step-by-step approach which will help to ensure the steady and effective functioning of the administrative institutions in Timor-Leste after the eventual withdrawal of UNMISET, and, more importantly, to ensure greater Timorese involvement in and ownership of the nation-building process.

With respect to Timor-Leste, my delegation would like to point out that the development of the country needs to be approached in a holistic manner. For Timor-Leste to progress towards a sustainable future, the country's economic and social dimensions, or the "human face" of Timor-Leste, will also require continued assistance from the international community. As much as the Government of the country needs international assistance, the people of Timor-Leste also need it.

In order for Timor-Leste to move forward in a sustainable manner, its people's standard of living and quality of life will also have to move upward gradually. The capacity-building tasks that the United Nations programmes and agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations and international donors have undertaken in Timor-Leste

have thus far resulted in remarkable progress in various areas.

However, uninterrupted international support in those economic and social dimensions remains crucial. Among other ills, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment still plague Timor-Leste and will continue to hamper its nation-building process and national development for some time in the future. The support of the international community to combat those problems will be needed even after the conclusion of UNMISET's mandate.

Timor-Leste is a country with a promising future. If nurtured, and with all the help provided by the international community, its potential can be increased considerably. The forthcoming development partners conference will provide us with a venue to reaffirm our support for Timor-Leste.

For its part, Thailand is pleased to have rendered support to Timor-Leste in its national development process, with a focus on human-resource development, in the fields agreed in the memorandum of understanding on economic and technical cooperation, which was signed in 2003, namely, agriculture, public health, fisheries, trade and investment, banking and insurance, tourism, energy, capacity-building on internal security issues and negotiations on a maritime zone, geo-information and a sustainable economy.

Sixteen activities have already been implemented in 2003 and 2004. The remaining 16 activities will be implemented by the end of 2005. Thailand is willing to continue its technical cooperation support to Timor-Leste after the completion of the current plan, in 2005. In addition, Thailand plans to cooperate with other donors, such as Japan's International Cooperation Agency, to supplement the bilateral cooperation between Thailand and Timor-Leste.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): I would like to join others in saying what a pleasure it is to have Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta here with us today. I would also like to thank Mr. Hasegawa for the introduction and briefing he gave with regard to the report of the Secretary-General.

New Zealand joins other speakers in reflecting on the unprecedented progress made by Timor-Leste towards self-sufficiency in just 5 years. Given the events of 1999, that has been a truly remarkable achievement, and one that should rightly engender pride among Timor-Leste's Government and people. When we consider the scale of suffering in terrible conflicts unfolding elsewhere on the international stage, it is heartening to see Timor-Leste focussing on the tasks associated with post-conflict peacebuilding.

The consolidation phase of the United Nations role in Timor-Leste, which was initiated last year, requires that a delicate balance be struck between a robust assessment of what is needed on the ground and an instinctive caution not to precipitously withdraw. We continue to see a role, beyond a standard developmental one, for the United Nations in Timor-Leste to safeguard the enormous progress that has been made to date.

The Secretary-General's latest report provides guidance on the areas in which the international community should continue to support Timor-Leste and identifies those sectors that are considered crucial for long-term stability. We consider a modest, time-bound follow-on mission to the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), tasked primarily with capacity-building, to be an appropriate way to assist Timor-Leste's transition to a sustainable development assistance framework.

The evidence of warm and strengthened relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia is to be welcomed. We are encouraged by the further progress on demarcation of the border, which has been referred to here today, including in the statement just made by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia. We look forward to further progress being achieved before the conclusion of UNMISET's mandate in May this year. We urge both Governments to also give priority to a response to the draft legal framework to guide border normalization issues, which was passed to them for consideration in November last year.

As a regional neighbour, Timor-Leste will continue to be one of our core bilateral development assistance partners. We will keep under review our bilateral assistance to determine whether there is additional assistance that we can provide. But we agree that there remain many capacity-building tasks that can best be provided for by multilateral institutions. We

therefore consider it appropriate that development agencies and international financial institutions have begun to assume some responsibilities that currently rest with the peacekeeping mission. We strongly support that as a means to assist Timor-Leste's transition from a peacekeeping to sustainable developmental framework.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5133

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5133rd meeting

Wednesday, 2 March 2005, 11.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Sardenberg	(Brazil)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Poirier
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-25298 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of March, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Joël Adechi, Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of February 2005. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Adechi for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council condemns with the utmost firmness the attack against a patrol of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) by the Front des Nationalistes et Intégrationnistes in Ituri which occurred on 25 February 2005 near the town of Kafé, resulting in the murder of nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers. It offers its condolences to the victims' families and to the authorities of Bangladesh. It commends the dedication of MONUC's personnel, who operate in particularly hazardous conditions. It welcomes the action of MONUC against the militia groups responsible for these killings and MONUC's continued robust action in pursuit of its mandate.

"The Security Council considers this aggression, by its intentional and well-planned nature, to be an unacceptable outrage. It calls upon the Government of National Unity and Transition immediately to take all necessary measures to bring to justice the perpetrators, sponsors and authors of this attack and welcomes the first arrests undertaken by the Government. It endorses in this regard the serious concerns expressed in Kinshasa on 28 February 2005 by the International Committee in Support of the Transition over the illegal and criminal activities of militia in Ituri and their military and political leaders, in particular Floribert Ndjabu, Germain Sukpa, Étienne Lona, Thomas Lubanga, Bosco Tanganda and Germain Katanga. It expresses its concern that the integration of Ituri militia officers into the Congolese Armed Forces has failed to lead to the disarmament of their troops, which should proceed without delay.

"The Security Council calls upon the Government of National Unity and Transition to strengthen its support for the implementation of the disarmament and community reintegration programme for Ituri militiamen. It considers those who try to impede this programme as a threat to the political process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It also calls upon the Government of National Unity and Transition urgently to deploy additional integrated troops and police units to Ituri, and invites donors to provide support for this vital undertaking.

"The Security Council reminds all States in the region of their responsibility to ensure compliance for the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1493 (2003) and is considering additional measures it might take to reinforce implementation and monitoring of the embargo.

further urges those States to ensure that their territories cannot be used by any Congolese armed group, notably the Ituri militia, whose activities perpetuate a climate of insecurity that affects the whole region.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for MONUC, and urges MONUC to continue to fulfil its mandate with determination. It notes the importance for MONUC to continue to strengthen its action in Ituri and in North and South Kivu."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/10.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5134

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5134th meeting

Friday, 4 March 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Sardenberg	(Brazil)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Fendrick

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-25562 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Dimitrij Rupel, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Mr. Dimitrij Rupel, and invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Dimitrij Rupel, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia. I now have the honour of giving him the floor.

Mr. Rupel: Let me first thank you, Mr. President, and the rest of the Security Council for inviting me and giving me this opportunity to speak before this distinguished group of representatives.

It is a pleasure and an honour to address the Security Council on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

This is not the happiest of times to be the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. As the Council undoubtedly knows, the OSCE still does not have a budget for 2005, some 10 weeks into the year. Nor does it have an agreement on a new scale of contributions. There is a lively high-level discussion going on about the future of the organization. All this comes during a year when the OSCE is supposed to be celebrating its contribution to promoting security and cooperation in Europe, reflecting on the 30 years since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and the 15 years since the Charter of Paris set out a vision for a Europe whole and free.

One might ask whether it is true that the OSCE is in crisis. Let me answer that it is certainly in transition. Some participating States have complained of double standards and have called for a review of how the OSCE monitors elections. There was no agreement on extending the mandate of the border monitoring operation in Georgia. There was no consensus among Foreign Ministers of OSCE States at the conclusion of the last two Ministerial Council meetings.

In response to the calls for reform, I have appointed a panel of eminent persons to make recommendations on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. That will be followed by high-level consultations and, subsequently, a Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana. There is a working group on reform that is looking at, among other things, updating the organization's rules of procedure. A decision has been taken that clarifies and strengthens the mandate of the Secretary General, and I am currently in the process of finding a successor to Ján Kubiš, whose term expires this June. We are also looking at how to improve the effectiveness of our field operations.

I see this process as an opportunity rather than as a crisis. I believe that challenges to the OSCE's relevance and strategic direction have shaken some States out of their complacency and brought into the open some issues that had been festering below the surface for some time. If there are strong differences of opinion about security in Europe, the OSCE is the ideal place to talk about them. So let us talk. And if things need to be improved, let us do it.

One of the OSCE's strengths is its ability to adapt to the challenges of the day. Changes in the European Union (EU), NATO and the Council of Europe reflect a Europe in transition, partly as a result of the enlargement of the European Union and NATO but also because of the need to cope with new threats to security. Organizations must remain dynamic to remain relevant, and the OSCE is no exception. So, I welcome the reform debate and initiatives to further strengthen the organization, not to kill it.

As the Council knows, the OSCE is a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the United

Nations Charter. We therefore read with interest the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) and hope for bold decisions, such as to make greater use of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter and further to enhance United Nations cooperation with regional organizations.

The OSCE went through a similar process two years ago, when it drew up the Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century, which was adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial Council meeting in December 2003. I believe that, by implementing the Strategy, the OSCE can take on some of the burden of the United Nations in the OSCE area. As the United Nations Panel noted, the Security Council's ability to more proactively prevent and respond to threats could be strengthened by making fuller and more productive use of regional organizations. The OSCE is well positioned and well equipped to participate.

The Panel also concluded that the United Nations should take fuller advantage of the early warning mechanisms of regional organizations and draw on their normative standards to guide preventive efforts. The OSCE has a well earned reputation in early warning, early action and conflict prevention. There are areas, such as preventing inter-ethnic conflict and regulating the marking and tracing and the brokering and transfer of small arms and light weapons, where our standards are even more progressive than those of the United Nations. The OSCE also coordinates assistance on the ratification and implementation of the 12 United Nations anti-terrorism conventions and protocols. And we work with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on addressing economic and environmental threats to security. We complement each other well in our work, and there is scope for further cooperation.

In Kosovo, the OSCE is an integral part of the pillar structure of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). That is a good example of how a regional organization can complement the efforts and enhance the capability of the United Nations. In this important year for Kosovo, I believe that the OSCE can play a key role in the standards review process and can remain part of the international presence in Kosovo. The OSCE has considerable expertise in national minority issues, policing and the building of effective public institutions, which are so essential for the peaceful and sustainable development of Kosovo. The OSCE's potential should be used to the fullest.

The case of Kosovo highlights an issue that we need to come to terms with in the international community, including in the OSCE area, namely, reconciling the desire for self-determination with the preservation of the territorial integrity of States. In parts of Moldova and Georgia and in the disputed territory of Nagorny Karabakh, the OSCE is actively trying to resolve conflicts that are sometimes referred to as frozen, but which have recently started to thaw.

In those cases the OSCE has clear mandates and is one of the lead agencies on the ground. There may be other examples of disputed autonomy where the OSCE could play a role.

I am encouraged by the slow, but steady, progress being made in the dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

I hope that the recent changes in Ukraine and the new post-election environment in Moldova will make possible a new attempt to resolve the Transdniestrian conflict.

In addition, the OSCE is working with the parties concerned to reduce tensions in South Ossetia, Georgia, and to promote demilitarization, build confidence and achieve a lasting settlement.

In all of those cases, I urge the members of the Security Council — in particular those who are mediators in those conflicts or who have influence over the parties — to support the OSCE's efforts. It is difficult for inter-State organizations to deal with non-State actors, even if, in some cases, they are the de facto authorities. There are times when the leverage of powerful States — including permanent members of the Council — can be crucial. I urge the Council to exert that pressure in the context of OSCE mediation efforts to help resolve those long-standing conflicts.

Another important issue in the Panel's report is the clash between the concept of the responsibility to protect and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of a State. That is a matter on which the OSCE is very clear and progressive, at least when it comes to human rights. In 1991, at a meeting in Moscow, OSCE States agreed that

> "the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the [OSCE] are matters of

direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned".

That legitimate intrusiveness is the basis on which participating States hold each other accountable for the implementation of their commonly agreed commitments. It is the justification for having OSCE missions in participating States helping host States to deal with specific challenges. And it is the reason the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media can, respectively, go to any State throughout the OSCE region to prevent inter-ethnic conflict and ensure respect for free media. I believe that that type of deep engagement is unprecedented; it needs to be preserved, all the while ensuring that this is done in a cooperative spirit.

The report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change highlighted threats to international security from which no State or region of the world is immune. In our interconnected world, security is indivisible. Multifaceted challenges require a multilateral response that takes a comprehensive view of security. The OSCE is doing its part. As I have already noted, it is a leader in early warning and conflict prevention. It has a limited, but focused, role in conflict settlement. And it has a proven track record in post-conflict rehabilitation and peacebuilding. It is an inclusive and truly regional organization that provides a valuable forum for dialogue on security issues of common concern. It has unique institutions with strong mandates that deal with national minorities, freedom of the media, democratic institutions and human rights. The OSCE is the lead election-monitoring body in Europe, and its reports are seen as an important quality-control stamp. The 18 OSCE field missions represent an invaluable on-the-ground presence and offer concrete assistance to participating States. And the OSCE has quickly developed capabilities to deal with new threats to security, including in anti-trafficking, counter-terrorism, border management and policing.

When addressing new threats to security, the bottom line for the OSCE is to uphold the rule of law. For example, we have to be sure that efforts to combat terrorism are not carried out in a way that violates human rights, that border guards learn sophisticated techniques and a proper code of conduct and that human trafficking is tackled by effective investigation, law enforcement and prosecution.

Policing is a classic example. In many tense situations, one does not need Blue Helmets; one needs effective policing. Good policing has a vital role to play in the prevention of conflict, the preservation of social stability during political crises and the post-conflict rehabilitation of societies. Without effective law enforcement, respect for the rule of law and the operation of institutions responsible for upholding it, there can be little likelihood of social, political or economic development in any State. The OSCE runs police development units in the western Balkans. A police assistance programme has been launched in Kyrgyzstan, and others are in preparation in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. No other international organization currently possesses the potential to strengthen long-term law enforcement capacity and institution-building in the OSCE region in the States most susceptible to crime, corruption and human rights violations.

I have highlighted policing because it is a good example of the type of programmatic, hands-on work that the OSCE does in addressing the needs of States and communities across Europe. States should not underestimate or take for granted the quiet, but useful, work that organizations like the OSCE do to make the world a safer place. We can do things better, and I welcome the reform debate on both sides. But in the process we should not lose sight of the good things that we do, the important commitments that have been agreed to by consensus and the merits of effective multilateralism.

Europe is not yet as whole and free as was envisioned at the OSCE's Paris summit in 1990. There is plenty of work to do, and we must remain vigilant that the progress that has been achieved in the past few years is not reversed. I am confident that the reform process will make even more people and, in particular, States aware — or remind them — of the usefulness of the OSCE and spur them to invest the necessary resources and political will to make it even more effective.

The OSCE should also be more open to sharing its experience and expertise with others. In 2004 the OSCE, at the request of the Afghan authorities, sent an election support team to Afghanistan. Earlier this year the OSCE sent a needs assessment team to the

Palestinian territories to see what help the OSCE could offer on elections. Mongolia is now an OSCE Partner for Cooperation. The Council will thus note that the OSCE has an impact beyond its vast region, and that it could develop such relations even further.

The world has changed dramatically in the past 30 years since a group of 35 heads of State came together at Helsinki on 1 August 1975 to sign a Final Act devoted to improving and intensifying their relations and to contributing to peace, security, justice, cooperation and rapprochement in Europe. The OSCE has also changed dramatically in that time, evolving from a conference into a highly sophisticated organization. But the challenge remains the same for the States that participate in the OSCE: to promote better relations among themselves and to ensure conditions in which their people can live in true and lasting peace. We must continue to work together towards that goal.

The President: As there is no list of speakers, I shall invite Council members who wish to address questions to the Chairman-in-Office to so indicate to the Secretariat as from now.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): Allow me, at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you very warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I wish you every success in that capacity, and I am confident that you will indeed be successful. I pledge my delegation's full cooperation in that regard.

I would like to voice a very special word of appreciation with regard to the excellent performance of Ambassador Adechi and his team during Benin's presidency in the month of February.

Turning to our business for today, I have a short comment to make and two questions to pose. I would like first to congratulate Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel on his very insightful and straightforward statement. Slovenia is one of Romania's valued partners in NATO, in the European Union and in regional affairs, and I would like to wish Mr. Rupel, from this particular perspective of our bilateral relations, a very successful term as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Two months into that mandate, we can already see an energetic and ambitious frontal approach to the most pressing matters on the organization's agenda. Romania is particularly pleased with the attention paid to the Kosovo issue, which is a challenge for the western Balkans and for the whole of Europe in the coming period.

Mr. Rupel raised some insightful points today, which also will remain the focus of our attention throughout 2005. One of those points refers to the degree of effectiveness of the multilateral handling of so-called frozen conflicts. Those protracted conflict situations are terrible problems for the regions in which they linger. I am sure that the "glass is half full" approach would suggest that it is at least good that those people are no longer fighting each other. However, the "glass is half empty" view shows that those situations confront the international community with constantly growing threats. Those areas that are outside international writ and settlement are strong impediments to the development of the countries and regions to which they belong and often tend to become hotbeds of organized crime, illegal trafficking, smuggling, proliferation and, not least, terrorism.

Romania believes that the United Nations and its Security Council, which has primary responsibility under the United Nations Charter for maintaining international security, and organizations such as the OSCE can and should do more to advance the settlement of such situations. Along those lines, I would like to kindly ask for Mr. Rupel's views on two issues. First, I would ask if he would elaborate on the objectives of the OSCE chairmanship regarding further steps in the settlement of frozen conflicts. Also, at this point, how does he assess the potential of the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE in dealing with protracted, frozen conflicts, and also in terms of conflict prevention? Secondly, perhaps he could further elaborate on the OSCE chairmanship's approach to the Transdiestrian conflict in the Republic of Moldova?

The President: I thank the representative of Romania for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Fendrick (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. Foreign Minister, for speaking to us today, clearly outlining the unique capabilities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which have made it so effective in securing peace and security. In your comments, you made a point also raised by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change: that the United Nations should cooperate more often and better with regional organizations. You highlighted early

warning, early action and conflict prevention as an area for further cooperation. To follow Ambassasor Motoc with basically the same question, how, in practical terms, do you think the two organizations can improve their cooperation in order to proactively prevent and respond to threats?

The second question we would ask concerns the following. You mentioned the success of the OSCE election teams sent to Afghanistan and to the Palestinian Authority and said that the OSCE could develop its relations beyond the OSCE region even further. What opportunities do you see for the OSCE and its expertise outside of the OSCE region?

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like at the outset, Sir, to welcome you and your delegation and to congratulate you on Brazil's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. We are also grateful to Ambassador Adechi and the entire delegation of Benin for their work presiding over the Council in February.

We are glad to welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Rupel, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia.

Russia has supported the basic priorities which the Slovenian chairmanship has proposed in the Permanent Council of the OSCE aimed at reforming, revitalizing and restoring balance in three areas of that organization's activities: security, the economy and the humanitarian field. We take particular note of the indicated need to enhance the role of the OSCE in the security sphere. For, in order for the OSCE fully to be able to realize its original purpose as a forum for broad dialogue among equals on the most important issues, there is a need to overcome artificial functional and territorial imbalances that have arisen in that organization's work.

Our delegation has consistently favoured comprehensive development and improvement of cooperation between the United Nations and its Security Council and regional and subregional arrangements based on the firm foundation of the United Nations Charter, in particular Chapter VIII, duly taking into account the comparative advantages of those organizations.

We note with satisfaction that, as a regional mechanism, the OSCE has established close and productive cooperation with the United Nations in a considerable number of key areas — first and foremost, those linked to security and to the settlement of regional conflicts. To cite examples solely from the Security Council agenda, we can refer to Abkhazia, Georgia, and to Bosnia and Herzegovina. We take particular note of the contribution of the OSCE in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) on Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro. The OSCE mission in that region, which is a component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, is playing an important role, in particular in observing and promoting compliance with human rights and in monitoring local mass media.

In that context, I would like to ask Mr. Rupel two questions. First, what additional steps must be taken to ensure truly equal protection of human rights for all inhabitants of Kosovo, first and foremost, members of non-Albanian minorities? Secondly, in the light of the negative experiences of March 2004, what steps is the OSCE planning to undertake in Kosovo — in cooperation, of course, with the United Nations — in order to prevent a recurrence of extremist manifestations on the part of l. al mass media and civil society organizations?

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Johnston (United Kingdom): On behalf of my delegation, Sir, we extend our congratulations to Brazil on assuming the presidency and offer our best wishes and our full cooperation in your programme of work for this month. May we also thank the Permanent Representative of Benin and his delegation and congratulate them on their outstanding efforts during the month of February.

The United Kingdom is a strong supporter of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and therefore we are very grateful to the Minister for his briefing this morning. We want to see an active and effective OSCE covering the whole range of its mandate. We welcome the work it is doing in the security field, encouraging member States to sign United Nations conventions on terrorism activity. We welcome its general contribution to support for the international standards agreed upon by all of us and reflected in the United Nations and in other

agreements. We also believe it makes a very important contribution to the building of democracy in Kosovo and across the region. And, although we welcome the reform initiatives and the report of the panel of eminent persons, we believe it is very important that new activities not be undertaken at the expense of the very important human rights and democracy-building functions.

Against that backdrop, I have two questions for the Minister. First, how would he assess the OSCE's ability to take on new areas of activity while remaining as effective, and indeed becoming more effective, in the areas in which it has specialized until now?

Secondly, given the expansion of the European Union's activities in the field of conflict prevention and resolution — with the European Security and Defence Policy in its military and civilian aspects and other issues of the European security strategy — how can we achieve a complementary and effective relationship among the European Union, the OSCE and other actors to effectively address European security in its broadest sense, both geographically and functionally?

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to me.

I now give the floor to Mr. Rupel to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Rupel: I do not know whether I shall be able to respond to all the questions in the way that is expected, but I will try my best. I will try to answer them one after another, as they were put to me.

Regarding frozen conflicts and their effective handling, let me say first that, in general terms, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is at its strongest in conflict prevention, but it also has a role in conflict settlement. The obvious locations, or destinations, are in South Ossetia, Transdniestria and Nagorny Karabakh; as Council members know, we have been active in those places. It is less a case of what the United Nations can do for the OSCE than of what the OSCE can do for the United Nations. That was the starting point, or presupposition, of my statement today and also a motive for my coming here. Effective conflict settlement through the OSCE would first be attempted without burdening the United Nations. Generally speaking, we could do more to increase the sharing of information on early warning so that it is followed by early action.

Regarding the further steps — how to combine and how to promote and achieve synergy between the OSCE and the United Nations — I have already said something, but this is a question that was addressed to me not only by the representative of Romania, but also by other colleagues. The OSCE attaches great importance to its links with the United Nations, and I am really thrilled to be able to meet with the Council today. As a regional organization, the OSCE contributes substantially to the maintenance of peace and security in its areas of responsibility and to the actual implementation of United Nations documents and principles. I am glad to see that the cooperation between our two organizations — one larger and more important and the other representing its 55 members — is close and continues to be strengthened. On many issues, our two organizations work in close synergy. In particular, we work very closely with the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the fight against terrorism. We have strong links with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe — I mentioned that in my presentation — and we work closely with the United Nations in the field, particularly with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I hope that that cooperation will be reflected in a General Assembly resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; such a text was not agreed upon at the Assembly's fifty-ninth session. We are currently working on finding consensus on such a decision. We are very pleased with initiatives aimed at deepening the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations. We also note the calls in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) for closer cooperation with regional organizations, especially in the areas of early warning and conflict prevention. We are interested in exploring that further.

I now turn to Transdniestria, which must be addressed in the near future, because it is a dangerous source of instability not only for Moldova, but for Ukraine as well. The changes in Ukraine and the new line of the Moldova leadership enable us to look for solutions. Control of the Ukrainian-Trandniestrian border — or, if you will, the Moldovan border — on

the Ukrainian side, if implemented rigorously, could convince Tiraspol within months that the current situation is not sustainable. I believe that decentralization and strong self-government would not only offer a chance for Transdniestria to reintegrate, but would also contribute to the democratization of Moldova.

I thank the representative of the United States for his questions regarding the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE; I have tried to respond partially to them.

Regarding our experiences in going beyond our standard area of operation, we would, of course, have to enhance our technical abilities and deal with the problems that are on the table, such as the budget and the scale of contributions. We also have a small management crisis regarding a new Secretary General. But I certainly believe that the OSCE should regard itself as an organization meant to work closely with the United Nations and actually to do United Nations work — or work that is in complete harmony with the United Nations — wherever possible and perhaps in places where the United Nations cannot work on its own.

I would now like to respond to the questions posed to me by the representative of the Russian Federation. I agree completely with what he said regarding the problem of balancing. I myself — so to speak — introduced the Slovenian chairmanship of the OSCE by saying that we need three R's: reform, revitalization and rebalancing. By "rebalancing", I meant creating more balance among the three components of our organization: the economic and ecological dimension, the human dimension and, of course, the political and military dimension. We need a more equal relationship, or attitude, towards all those components.

In that respect, I have proposed a couple of steps; we have also had discussions with representatives of the Russian Federation about conferences, workshops and working groups that have been proposed by that delegation. I have found the discussions to be extremely interesting and very important, relating, for instance, to conferences dealing with energy security and military doctrines. So, I think we should occasionally pause briefly and try to see what is in everyone's — or the majority's — interest.

I would certainly hope tha
differences regarding the scale o
we can deal with the problems
and not be so preoccupied with
think it would be wrong to conce
organization that is able to d
problems, rather than doing its
world where, indeed, it is
sometimes helps to solve serious
and so on.

On the subject of Serbia
Kosovo, I am in complete harmo
members have said regarding the
rights in Kosovo. I have visited K
occasions: after the events of Ma
few weeks ago. I must say that I
progress I saw regarding th
provisional leadership of Kosov
interlocutors in the leadership —
everybody: the Prime Minister,
Assembly and the President — r
be no good solution for Kos
everybody in Kosovo on board, n
other minorities, and without
everybody in the international
been involved in the resolutio
Kosovo in the past. Here, I am r
of Seven countries and, of co
Nations and the OSCE specifically
our best to prevent the events
being repeated, or even atter
Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, the S
of the United Nations Secretary-G
good work in Kosovo on this spec

I have my worries, as I su
does. These worries relate to the p
resulting from the indictment of R
present Prime Minister of the pro
I hope that the indictment will
Albanian uprisings. I do not think
not in the interest of the Kosova
direction. I hope that this or some
will not be used for provocation
I do not think that anybody
heightening the situation in Koso
that the status quo does not reall
think that there are some radi
political life of the region that w
the status quo; there are also son

in Kosovo itself that would like the same. Therefore, we should be very careful when we deliberate on those issues.

Regarding cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations, I would like to mention briefly that we feel that the role of the United Nations is key, as a new Security Council resolution would be necessary. Of course, I would be very happy if a decision by the Secretary-General to appoint a special envoy for Kosovo were coordinated with Brussels and Washington; those capitals are considering appointing their own envoys as well.

We are now in a precarious and difficult situation, but I think that there are plenty of good ideas and concepts. Thus, we should not see a repetition of the events of 2004.

Regarding the questions of the representative of the United Kingdom, I have already said that I feel that synergy should be promoted in the relationships not only between the OSCE and the United Nations, but also between the OSCE and the European Union (EU). I think that, as far as conflict prevention is concerned, we have common interests and many similar concepts. I am thinking, for instance, about Georgia. We have had a problem with continuing our border monitoring operation in Georgia. And, as I understand it, that project will be stopped, or has already been stopped, because there is no new mandate. In Vienna, we are now discussing a similar or related idea of training border guards. But, I also hear of interest on the part of the European Union to help us with some ideas of its own. If the EU can step in in this situation, that would, of course, be of great importance to Georgia; naturally, there would be no jealousy as far as the OSCE is concerned. In this respect, there would be no problem on the part of the OSCE, because I think that we are a project- and effect-oriented organization rather than one in competition with other organizations in processes like forum-shopping, if I may put it that way.

I think I have now responded to all the questions. I was delighted to have had the opportunity to answer those questions.

The President: I thank Mr. Dimitrij Rupel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia and Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.